

Dramatic turnaround as primary rated good by Ofsted

# SCHOOL IS BACK ON RIGHT TRACK

Report by Carl Jackson

A LARGE primary school criticised for underperforming pupils and substandard teaching two years ago has now been rated Good by an education watchdog.

Beacon Primary in Willenhall, which has more than 400 pupils on the roll, was told to improve by Ofsted in 2015.

But now inspectors have concluded it is 'Good' across the board following their latest visit in February.

Their latest report said: "The headteacher, through his commitment, vision and imagination, has led a rapid improvement. He sets very high expectations for pupils and staff alike. The governing body understands the school's strengths and weaknesses in detail, and provides effective support and scrutiny. Pupils benefit greatly from a broad and often exciting curriculum. They enjoy good extra-curricular activities, especially in sport."

"Leaders have successfully extended the early years provision to include two-year-olds. Many children in the younger years catch up rapidly from low starting points."

## Writing

The school was issued praise in the key areas it had previously been told to improve. The report added: "In 2016, pupils left key stage 2 having made progress in writing and mathematics that was above the national average."

"Pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, are currently making strong progress in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects including science, music and physical education. Teaching is good. Teachers set work that builds upon what pupils can already do, and check carefully on their progress in lessons."

Beacon Primary has also maintained Good standards in the category concerned with pupil behaviour and welfare. Ofsted said: "Pupils' attitudes to school are consistently positive. They show exceptional care for each other, and take great pride in their work. They behave well in lessons and at social times."

The school has now been advised to focus on three key areas to improve their rating further; teaching quality, the effectiveness of leadership and pupil attendance.

Headteacher Paul Drew said: "The whole team at Beacon has worked incredibly hard over the last two years to make sure that our children get the best education, we look forward to continuing our journey of excellence."

## THE ONLY WAY IS SADDLERS FOR STAR PLAYER JAMES



Among the crowds are James Argent with Suzi and Joel Richards at Walsall College



James seen on the hallowed turf of Bescot, where he will be playing in a few weeks

THE only way James Argent is going is down the Wednesbury Road to Walsall – with the TOWIE reality TV star having already visited the town to drum up support for a celebrity football match.

The Only Way is Essex's James is one of a long list of stars who will be playing in a celebrity match at Banks's Stadium on May 13 in aid of the Smile for Joel charity and Compton Hospice.

He visited the Walsall FC ground but also stopped off to rally support at such places as Walsall College, where Joel's mother Suzi works, and Wood Green Academy

and Stuart Bathurst schools in Wednesbury. Crowds of pupils and students flocked to see the reality TV star, and while at Bescot he was even allowed on the hallowed turf.

He said it was 'an honour' to be taking to the pitch to raise funds for the two charities.

Smile for Joel was founded in memory of Walsall FC fans 19-year-old Joel Richards and grandfather Patrick Evans, 78, both from Wednesbury, and Joel's uncle Adrian Evans, aged 49, from Bilston, who were all killed in the massacre at the holiday resort of Sousse in Tunisia 2015. The char-

ity helps families who are victims of traumatic bereavement.

The visit by James came ahead of a fundraising effort by a team from Smile for Joel including Joel's brother Owen. He and a group of fundraisers took part in the weekend's Birmingham 10K event in memory of Joel, Patrick and Adrian and 'all those who never came home'. They raised over £1,500 for the charity. And they got celebrity backing from Spaniard Ballet frontman Tony Hadley who was pictured donning a Smile for Joel wristband in support.

● Teams – Page 5



James outside the Bank's Stadium



Wristband – Tony Hadley

## COUNCIL

Charity gets town hall lease for £1 per year

A DECISION to lease out Darlaston Town Hall for £1 a year has been approved by council bosses.

Walsall Council's cabinet passed the move on Wednesday which will secure £250,000 investment from the Murray Hall Community Trust (MHCT) which will take on the building in a 25-year agreement.

The trust is a Sandwell-based charity set up in 1994 to promote health and wellbeing in the region. They want to develop a community hub at the hall providing services to enhance personal development, healthy lifestyles and community engagement.

## PLANS

Cafe to be turned into shared house

PLANS have been submitted to transform a Darlaston cafe into a shared home with more than 30 rooms.

GD Designs have submitted a planning application to Walsall Council to extend Lloyds Cafe in Park Lane into a House of Multiple Occupancy – with 34 bedrooms, a parking area and shared amenity space.

The application reads: "The existing cafe and takeaway are proving to be unsustainable as too is the car sales business on site. A large portion of the building remains unused and the site is not operating to its full potential."

## CAMPAIGN

Online fundraiser to save book shop

A CROWDFUNDING campaign to save a popular independent bookshop in Walsall has hit the £300 mark.

Scott Southey, co-owner of Southcart Books, set up a fundraising website to help raise money for an expansion to the Lower Hall Lane shop.

But following co-owner Amy Carter's heart attack, he says the pair are now raising funds to help save the shop.

A £750 target was set by the pair to compensate for the money lost while Scott cared for Amy as she recovered from her illness. The appeal had hit £300 and was set to end on Thursday.

## INSIDE

FINAL FAREWELL TO JIMMY JOS



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# £2,000 raised at gig in memory of pupil

A CHARITY gig raised more than £2,000 in memory of a school pupil who died after a brain tumour.

Aldridge youth charity event BENeft Gig raised £2,100 at the concert, taking the total raised by the community project to beyond £10,000.

The event is held annually to celebrate young live music in Aldridge and is named in memory of young music fan, Aldridge School pupil Ben Sam-brook, who passed away aged 14 in February 2014.

Just 10 days before his death, his friends held the first BENeft Gig to raise awareness of brain tumours and money for brain tumour charities and Ben expressed a wish for the gig to continue.

Julie Homfray, from Cohesion who produced the event, praised the community and young people involved. She added: "Local organisations really believe in what we're trying to do here - get young people to raise the bar with their music performance and show their impressive skills on stage in a professional level gig."

"We also give them the tools to promote their own show, with targets and rewards, so the whole event teaches valuable lessons you'd never get in the classroom."

"Ben was a huge fan of live music and he wanted the gig to reflect the over-looked young talent in

our area, as well as raising money for causes close to his family's heart. I'm so pleased that in four gigs we've raised over £10,000 for Brian Tumour charities, particularly as March would have been his 18th birthday."

Local charity Rosie's Helping Hands with Aldridge company Nameplate UK were major sponsors this year.

The team hope to hold a disco in the summer to raise money to stage the 2018 event. This will also launch the search for bands wanting to form or prepare for next year's gig. For more information, visit the Facebook Page BENeft Gig.

## CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:  
Tel: 01543 465305  
E-mail: walsall.chronicles@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:  
Tel: 01902 319453  
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430  
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Sarah Jones  
Tel: 01543 465341  
E-mail: sarah.winfield-jones@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Marguerita Finnegan  
Tel: 01902 319627  
E-mail: marguerita.finnegan@expressandstar.co.uk

MOTORING: Phil Morris  
Tel: 01902 319177  
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DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones  
Tel: 01902 319990  
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# Hundreds pay respects at showman's funeral



James Joseph Williams

**HUNDREDS** gathered to pay their respects at the funeral of a much-loved figure in Walsall and the showman community.

James Joseph Williams, known as 'Jimmy Jos', died on April 3 at the age of 63, after a long battle with cancer and heart disease.

Family and friends from across the United Kingdom gathered at All Saints Church in Bloxwich, to pay tribute to the husband, father and grandfather, who was born and bred



A family tribute at the funeral which took place at All Saint's Church



The funeral cortege makes its way towards All Saints Church



The arrival of the coffin at the church



A floral tribute is brought in

which across the road from the church before the funeral.

The pub is named after the showman community in the area.

Both the upstairs and the downstairs of the church were packed-out with guests who attended to pay their respects.

The service concluded with a reading of The Showmen's Prayer.

A statement from the family said: "Jimmy had a great sense of humor with an easy going manner. He had an incredible guild career which has earned him the uttermost respect.

"He will be greatly missed by his family and friends."

# 400 homes plans given green light by planners

PLANS to build more than 400 homes in Walsall as part of a major regeneration scheme have been approved by planning chiefs - after a lengthy debate.

Goscode Lodge Crescent in Pelsall will see 426 new homes built, with new roads and parking. However, concerns were raised about highway access, pedestrian safety and public footpaths.

Severn Trent, who have a base next to the site, also spoke of fears that their transport would effect new residents.

A spokesman from the company said: "It will be neighbouring our treatment works that operate on a 24-hour basis."

"While we are keen to support projects such as this, this site is being used frequently by tankers. We fear that this will impact on residents."

The site has been vacant for 10 years. Of the 426 homes planned, 312 will be for private sale, 74 for affordable rent and 40 wellbeing homes - for those that want to stay in their own home but need support. It is part of the Goscode Lane Corridor scheme.

Speaking at the planning committee meeting, Councillor Ann Young said: "This is a wonderful opportunity but I do have several issues that cause me great concern. "There are safety issues such as the size of the footpaths."

"We need the highway issues sorted."

Graham Nolan, from Keepmoat homes who are behind the plans, said: "We understand that Severn Trent have raised concerns but it is noted that the site did previously accommodate residential housing."

## GP surgery put in special measures

A GP surgery with more than 4,000 patients has been placed in special measures by a health watchdog.

A report found there was a 'risk of harm' and 'ineffective' infection control procedures at Jubilee Health Centre, on Upper Russell Street in Wednesbury.

It was given an inadequate rating by The Care Quality Commission (CQC) after an inspection.

Inspectors found that the provider was 'inadequate for safety', 'risks were not managed well enough to ensure patients were kept safe' and medical records inspectors reviewed 'did not contain accurate, complete and contemporaneous record' following the inspection which took place on January 9.

The health centre declined to comment.

## Sewer repairs see part of road shut

DRIVERS in Darlaston are being reminded that a road will be closed until Monday. Berry Avenue was due to shut for two weeks near to the junction with Wiley Avenue. Amey is carrying out sewer repair work on behalf of Western Power Distribution.

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# Match bans for Wolves fans after Blues clash

SIX Wolves supporters caught throwing plastic bottles, lighters, a broken seat and a coin during a Birmingham City derby have been banned from attending matches for three years.

The men were each given a football banning order following the February 24 Championship league fixture.

The disorder broke out when Blues striker David Davis, who was a former Wolves player, celebrated the 2-1 win in front of fans at Molineux, Walsall Magistrates' Court heard.

The group, who had attended the match separately, then began to lob items towards the pitch and Blues fans from the Wolves' South Bank Jack Haywood stand. More than 80 seats inside the stadium were broken.

Paul Deakin, aged 54, from Charles Street, Willenhall, Iain Hills, 20, from Clifton Street, Sedgley, Alex Price, 26, from Pale Street, Dudley, Jamie Smith, 32, from Park Lane, Wolverhampton, George White, 18, from Warash Close, Wolverhampton and Luke Elsmore, 30, from Burton Old Road East, Lichfield, all pleaded guilty to throwing a missile.

Deakin and Smith threw a plastic bottle, Price and White threw a lighter, Elsmore lobbed a chair and Hills hurled a coin, the court heard.

Miss Val Hart, prosecuting, said: "There was a crowd of more than 25,000 and 2,000 away supporters sat in the lower tier of this stand."

"It was a high-risk match with 150 police officers working. It was one of the worst occasions of in-crowd behaviour during a match."

"Mr Deakin said he retaliated by throwing a bottle after one was thrown at him drenching him in beer. Price said he had just 'blew his lid' and others claimed it was an intense game and in the heat of the moment."

As well as the banning order, all men had to pay a £100 fine, £135 in costs and a £30 victim surcharge.

## Shop is frying high after award

AN Aldridge chippy has been named top of the shops in Walsall.

Aldridge Chippy 2 has been on Salters Road for eight years, offering a cheeky temptation to those who have burned off a few calories at the nearby Walsall Wood Gym. Now it has been named the borough's best in a competition run by the Chronicle's sister paper, the Express & Star.

Manager Tryfen Papettas, said: "Everybody is really happy that we have won the award."

Mr Papettas added: "I think we are popular because of the service, the quality, the size of our portions and our efficiency and speed."

The pricing has also gone down well with locals who can get a cone of chips for £1.50 and a large 18 ounce fish and chips for £6.30. The Walsall runner-up was Copperfish in Leamore Lane, while Orange Chippy in Myatt Avenue, Aldridge came third.

# Firestarter's party fear over rubbish



The rubbish which has been dumped

A HEAP of rubbish branded fit for a 'firestarters party' is only getting worse, a councillor has claimed.

A picture taken at Kendrick Road, near Moxley, shows the extent of fly-tipping at the site which has now created a mountain of trash featuring mattresses, bath tubs, sinks, furniture and fridges.

Councillor Doug James, who represents the area, expressed fears the 'eyesore' would put off prospective businesses coming to the town, hampering any chances of opening a railway station on the site as well as

attract arsonists. He said: "A public eyesore on Kendrick Road just keeps growing. It is easily recognised from James Bridge and it is now the talk of the town and a landmark.

"We all hear about partnership working and tougher action on criminals but that is only for the glossy brochures and council reports in Darlaston."

"Weeks after reporting the problem it has increased and the threat worsened. Potentially this may be a site for the future Darlaston Railway Station if the surveyors ever find it again

under the garbage. What business will Walsall Council attract to the Darlaston Enterprise Zone with this eyesore for all to see."

"I expect to hear of a huge fire in Kendrick Road very soon, sadly, placing fire service staff at risk. This mess is a firestarters party night".

Earlier this year the Express & Star revealed the scale of fly-tipping in the area with more than 30,000 incidents reported to councils in the Black Country, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Birmingham last year, a 16 per cent rise on 2012/13 figures.

# Street-drinking ban plan for town centre

## STREET drinking could be outlawed in Walsall town centre under the latest plans.

Walsall Council wants to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to clamp down on increasing problems in the town centre, mainly related to drink.

The PSPO would outlaw street drinking and groups congregating to drink, as well as a host of other offences such as the taking of drugs and aggressive beggar.

Police officers would be able to confiscate drink and drugs. Town centre councillor Aftab Nawaz said he would welcome the proposal as he claims residents are left 'horrified' at people's behaviour in the town centre.

He said: "We have had many instances where anti-social behaviour has been quite rife, whether it is people standing around drinking or doing some other disgusting activities. As a St Matthew's councillor I have had many residents come to me saying they are really horrified at the way people behave in the town centre so anything to improve that is welcome.

### Tackle

"Also we need to attract people to Walsall town centre and if someone has a bad experience it will be difficult to get them back. Cracking down on anti-social behaviour is something I very much support."

As well as tackling drinking, the PSPO would also prohibit people from causing a nuisance in shops and in Walsall market, outlaw people from using hypodermic needles in a public place, dropping the needles or other drug paraphernalia, people begging in a manner to cause harassment or distress, people loitering around the bus station, cenotaph and other landmarks. The PSPO also bans residents from consuming any psychoactive substance and urinating or defecating in public.

Lorraine Boothman, the regulatory services manager at Walsall Council, said: "We receive many complaints about the behaviour of people in the town centre – behaviour which can be intimidating or offensive to others."

Consultation on the PSPO has already started with special drop-in sessions set up this month for residents to ask questions of the council and of local police officers. The sessions will be held at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, tomorrow, Friday, from 1-4pm, Tuesday, May 9, from 10am until 1pm and Wednesday, May 17, from 5-8pm.

## Malcolm relishes chance to sell sign



Retired butcher, Malcolm Powers, seen with the Colman's Mustard sign which used to be in his shop

A RETIRED butcher is selling an rare item from his past.

Malcolm Powers once owned his own butchers on Coltham Road call M J Powers Butchers when he was 21 which is where the sign once hung.

Now 74, Malcolm, from Short Heath in Willenhall, is looking to sell the piece of history – which he believes is one of the original

signs. The sign was attached to the wooden counter in the shop before he took it over, but Malcolm later moved it to a spot in the window.

He said: "The sign was there when I took over the butchers.

"I retired 12 years ago and now I'm looking to sell it.

"None of my children want the sign so I'm looking to sell it

to someone that might want it. A local businessman offered to buy the sign for £30 many years ago but I turned him down because I knew it'd be worth more than that in the future and it was more than that to me."

Malcolm hopes to sell the sign for around £250. Anyone interested in buying it can call him on 07532 223407.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Museum goes back in time for VE day

THE Museum of Cannock Chase is holding its annual VE Day celebrations on Saturday. The museum, off Valley Road in Hednesford, is putting on a variety of events to celebrate Victory in Europe day.

Officially, Monday May 8 will be VE Day, marking the day after Germany surrendered in Europe during the Second World War. The day at the museum will include craft activities for children, a 1940s singer, staff in costume and a wartime radio show.

The event will run from 11am until 4pm. Due to limited parking at the museum, those attending are asked to park considerately.

### Micro pub given the green light

ANOTHER micro pub has been given the go-ahead in Wolverhampton. The plans for the pub conversion on Newhampton Road West at the former New Style Windows site have been approved.

The application received a mixed response from the public, with positive comments including 'the venue would be a good social outlet for neighbours and would likely help isolated people in the community by providing a meeting place'.

A petition against the pub received 14 signatures, claiming it could have a 'harmful impact on highway safety and inadequate on-street parking'.

### Clothing firm move confirmed

THE International Riding Company has acquired equestrian clothing company Mears, which has been announced.

Mears, of Harrison Street, Walsall, was founded in 1982 and produces tailored riding jackets, hunt coats and three-piece suits.

The company also kitted out the London 2012 British equestrian team.

John Mears, son of the company founder, is selling the business upon his retirement. He said: "This is an excellent opportunity for the company started by father in 1982 – and our loyal Mears employees – to develop."

### Beer festival gets July date this year

THE annual Aldridge Beer Festival will be held on July 8 this year.

The event, which raises funds for 36th Walsall Scout Group, is taking place in the scout headquarters at Middlemore Lane from 7pm.

Tickets for those who wish to attend are £5 and can be bought in advance by calling 07710 757486.

### Polish day on way

POLISH Heritage Day will be celebrated in West Bromwich at its town hall on Saturday. The free event will start at 4pm and will include a free exhibition called 'From Exile to Freedom'.



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## COUNTY NEWS

## Railway trespass number on rise

MORE people than ever in the West Midlands are endangering their lives by trespassing on rail tracks, new figures reveal.

There were 588 trespass incidents in the region last year – a rise of two per cent compared to 2015 – according to data from Network Rail and the British Transport Police.

There were 58 children caught by police too, with boys aged 14 to 16 being the main offenders and peaks coinciding with school holidays.

Insp Dave Rams, from West Midlands British Transport Police, said: "We believe the number of children we encounter trespassing every year is just the tip of the iceberg."

## Appeal is made on tackling pollution

CAMPAIGNERS have urged West Midlands mayor candidates to commit to tackling air pollution.

A doctor from Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Hospitals Trust and academics from the University of Birmingham have signed a letter to the candidates. They said: "From Wolverhampton to Coventry, legal limits of air pollution are broken in every local authority in the West Midlands. We need our leaders to act."

Sarah Gray, of the British Lung Foundation, said: "Air pollution is pernicious in the way that it unknowingly finds its way into our respiratory system."

## Lions roar back in 140-mile ride

TWO Midland members of a national organisation cycled from Blackpool to Birmingham in aid of charity.

Simon Moss and Japp De Jonge from Birmingham arrived in the city on Monday.

They attended the annual convention of Lions Clubs of England Scotland, Wales and Ireland which was held in the seaside town on Saturday – and cycled back.

Their journey was more than 140 miles which raised funds for charity Hearing Dogs for the Deaf.

## Comic's show is Wehn upgrade takes place

COMEDIAN Henning Wehn's Wolverhampton show has been upgraded to the Civic Hall due to popular demand.

The German comic was due to perform at the Wulfrun Hall later this year, but has now been moved.

He will now be at the Civic on October 27. Tickets are available at [wolvescivic.co.uk](http://wolvescivic.co.uk).

## It's all red at library

THE Library of Birmingham was lit up in red to mark the 50th anniversary of housing charity Crisis, which is campaigning for more research to tackle homelessness. The city council showed its support for the charity last Monday night.

## Nursery in dramatic turnaround

A WALSALL nursery has undergone a dramatic turnaround after going from being rated 'inadequate' to 'outstanding' in just six months.

In a glowing report, Abu Bakr

Nursery on Wednesbury Road, Calthorpe, has received the highest grade possible from Ofsted and was praised on the quality of teaching, parent partnership and effectiveness of the leadership and management.

The nursery was rated inadequate

for its leadership, quality of teaching, behaviour and outcomes for children.

Addressing the turnaround, an Ofsted report compiled by inspector Joanna Hunt reads: "The setting have made excellent progress since their last inspection. The quality of teaching is consistently outstanding throughout the nursery."

"Children experience exceptionally exciting and varied activities that

cover all aspects of their learning in depth."

Asma Zaki, nursery manager, praised the hard work put in by staff to contribute towards the turnaround.

He said: "We are delighted to receive an 'outstanding' judgement. Ofsted recognised all the hard work that my team has put in to ensure that every area of care and education is provided at the highest level."

## Council en route with £6m plans for A461

COUNCIL chiefs have revealed plans for a £6 million revamp of one of the key routes through Walsall – in a bid to solve commuters' congestion misery.

Walsall Council bosses are looking to tackle serious traffic issues on the A461 Lichfield Road, which runs from the town centre to the borough's boundary, by widening the roads and installing new signals.

However, the final stage of the plans could take three years, according to council documents.

Earlier this year the first phase of plans for the A461 were revealed, targeting two locations – at the route's junctions with the B4152 Salters Road and the A452 Chester Road.

Phase two of the scheme will target the junction of A461 Mellish Road and phase three the junction of A461 / Pel-Sall Lane / Daw End (Rushall).

Mellish Road will be given an up-

graded roundabout design in an effort to reduce delays while the Rushall phase will see 'significant change' carried out to the junction layout and upgraded traffic signal technology installed.

The council will be seeking money from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership's Transport Development Fund, according to papers, but will only be applying for £90,000 this year in order to develop the plans.

Councillor Mike Bird said that calls for improvement on the route have been made since he was council leader, adding that he was pleased to see them move forward.

## Help us tackle car crime, police urge

CAR crime is 'too high' throughout Walsall according to police who have warned of break-ins, car key burglaries and number plate thefts in the borough.

Police have urged motorists to make sure they have locked their vehicles, keeping items such as sat navs and purses out of view, fitting number plates with one-way screws and keeping car keys out of view in the home.

Spokesman Kevin Pitt said: "Having items stolen from your vehicles – and the associated expense – can be easily avoided by taking at least two basic precautions.

"Don't walk away from your car without checking that doors are locked. Secondly, always remove items from view, even if they are of little value."

## Pub quiz to raise funds for charity

A QUIZ in aid of Link4Life takes place at Hawkins Sports & Social Club in Cheslyn Hay tonight, Friday, from 8.30pm onwards.

The last fundraising quiz at the Coppice Lane club raised £780 in aid of Walsall St Giles Hospice.

Joel Well reported a number of large deep potholes on the A449 between Stewponey junction and Lawnswood Rd junction in Kingswinford. She said: "There is a strong possibility of an accident on this busy, fast road as drivers swerve to avoid them."

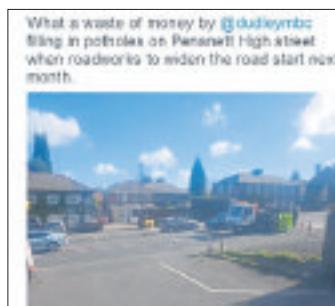
Adrian Gallis complained that Wombourne in South Staffordshire had been 'seemingly forgotten by Staffordshire highways department'.



Richard Sears reported a pothole at the entrance of the Chase Golf Club and Spa



Glenn Sealey, of Cannock, sent us a picture of a deep pothole on a road in Heath Hayes



In Pensnett workers were filling in holes on the High Street which is due to undergo roadworks

He said: "The whole village is blighted by potholes but one of the worst roads is a 200m stretch of Station Road starting at Ounsdale Road, there are at least 20 holes, some 3ins deep and others up to 3ft long. The potholes also continue down Bull Meadow Lane. Some holes in these roads were painted marked for repair months ago."

But even the repairs are being questioned. Staffordshire reader Richard Sears, of Halesowen, reported a pothole at the entrance of the Chase Golf Club and Spa on Pottal Pool Road in Cannock in February.

He said: "On the 27th April I received an email from Staffordshire County Council informing me that the pothole had been fixed. On the 29th

April I visited the Golf Club and took the opportunity to inspect the repaired pothole. Indeed a repair had been made to the damaged area but unsurprisingly because the repair could best be described as shoddy, a pothole is already developing."

And another reader sent us a picture of a deep hole in Love Lane, Great Wyrley, which is regularly used as a rat run for traffic trying to escape the A34 Walsall Road through the village.

The Chronicle has invited readers to help us find the most pothole-plagued roads in the area which we will be flagging up to highways authorities and pushing for priority repairs. We will be revealing the most problematic areas soon.

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# 270-homes revamp due at former factory site

PLANS to build 270 homes as part of a major regeneration scheme have been submitted.

The former Cerro copper refinery factory site on Goscole Lane, Bloxwich, will be transformed under plans from the St Francis Group.

The site, known locally as Elkingtons, has long been earmarked for work as part of the Goscole Lane Corridor. It was revealed last week that plans for 426 homes on the nearby Goscole Lane Crescent are set to get the go-ahead.

Housing provider whg has submitted the application after previously spending £50 million on transforming the Poets Estate area in Goscole, creating 412 homes at a site now known as Waters Keep. At present, the plans for the former Cerro site are being screened for opinion.

Cerro once employed more than 1,000 workers and closed its Black Country operation in 2010 after falling victim to the recession.

After a low order book, dropping to a two-day working week, and axing 36 jobs, the firm closed the factory.

Former mayor of Walsall, Pete Smith, said that he welcomed the plans and he had long called for work to be done at the site. He said: "Hopefully this is the first real step in the process of regenerating this site."

"This will be welcomed by the local community which has suffered and been concerned about this derelict land on the former copper refinery site on Goscole Lane. It has been an absolute eyesore for this time."

## Swinton jobs in doubt with move

JOBS could be at risk at an insurance broker's 10 branches in the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Swinton has announced plans to review 84 of its 194 high street branches and axe 900 jobs by the end of this year. It says more people are choosing to renew their policies with the company online.

The firm has stores in Darlington Street, Wolverhampton; High Street, Dudley; Avon Road, Cannock; Eastgate Street, Stafford; Bridge Street, Walsall; Walsall Road, Great Barr; High Street, Halesowen; Foster Street East, Stourbridge and Lower Mill Street, Kidderminster.

The firm will now begin a formal consultation with all affected staff.

## Musical to open at the Garrick

BROWNHILLS Musical Theatre Company's production of the musical 9-to-5 runs until Saturday at Lichfield Garrick Theatre. Tickets costing £19.50 and £21 are available from the box office on 01543 412121.

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# Stars pitch in for charity as teams line up



Shayne Ward, who is a team manager



Blue singer Lee Ryan



Reality star Calum Best



Footballer Wayne Bridge



Katie Price, signed up as a boss too

WITH the celebrity list growing longer and longer, tickets for a charity football match at Banks's Stadium are rapidly being snapped up. The star-studded event is raising money for the Smile for Joel and Compton Hospice charities with Katie Price and singer Shayne Ward signed up to manage the two celebrity teams.

Taking place at the Walsall FC ground on May 13, tickets initially went on sale for the HomeServe stand only but demand was so great they also opened up the lower tier of the Tile Choice stand. And many of the blocks in this tier are now sold out too.

The list of celebrities confirmed so far include members of boy band Blue Lee Ryan Simon Webbe and Antony Costa, along with Steps singer Lee Latchford-Evans. Meanwhile, there

are X Factor stars Stevi Ritchie and Che Chesterman, plus 911 star Jimmy Constable and MC Harvey from So Solid Crew.

Actors include Jake Wood (Max Branning in EastEnders); Oliver Phelps (George Weasley in Harry Potter); Nev Wilshe (Call Centre); Max Morley (Love Island Winner); Austin Armacost (Celebrity Big Brother); Liam Gatsby (The Only Way is Essex) and fellow TOWIE star James 'Arg' Argent who was promoting the match in Walsall last week. Tickets are just £10 for adults and £5 for juniors and available from the stadium ticket office on 01922 651 416.

But stars of reality TV are turning out in force, with such names as Calum Best (Celebrity Big Brother); Nev Wilshe (Call Centre); Max Morley (Love Island Winner); Austin Armacost (Celebrity Big Brother); Liam Gatsby (The Only Way is Essex) and fellow TOWIE star James 'Arg' Argent who was promoting the match in Walsall last week. Tickets are just £10 for adults and £5 for juniors and available from the stadium ticket office on 01922 651 416.

A number of TV presenters are con-

# 33 facing action over Tunisia terror attack

THIRTY-THREE people are being prosecuted over the Tunisia hotel massacre which left 30 British holidaymakers – including three members of a Black Country family – dead, it has been reported.

Members of the security forces and hotel guards are believed to be among those charged with failing to help tourists.

By Richard Guttridge

Marhaba Hotel will begin on May 26. It had previously been revealed that six hotel security guards had been charged for failing to protect holidaymakers.

Ms Richards said: "I knew there had been several arrests but certainly not 33. It is very upsetting not to be kept in the loop. We have never been given an option to attend, it is something we would have to fund ourselves. There has been very little communication from Tunisia."

The inquests heard how police and tourist security "deliberately and unjustifiably slowed their response" as holidaymakers fled for their lives.



The three victims, Patrick Evans, Joel Richards and Adrian Evans, on the plane

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Jail warning for gold chain thief

A WALSALL teenager who snatched a £900 gold chain hanging round the neck of a man serving in a fish and chip shop has been warned he is facing a substantial prison sentence.

Zak Cleere walked into the shop in Beeches Road, Leamore on January 2 with a second man and ordered a meal, said Mr David Bennett prosecuting at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

He said the 19-year-old then suddenly lunged forwards to grab the chain and he and the other man ran from the shop before jumping into a waiting car that sped away from the scene. The incident was captured on CCTV inside the shop.

The teenager of Western Avenue, Walsall who was on bail at the time admitted robbery and also breaching a suspended prison sentence imposed for burglary.

Mr Oliver Woolhouse, defending, told the court that Cleere who had 20 previous convictions had a number of serious medical problems, and he asked for more details of these to be investigated. Eaves was remanded in custody until May 16.

### Getting to the heart of matter

A UNIQUE live experience will offer pupils from across Walsall an in-depth understanding of the human anatomy and physiology.

Anatomy Lab LIVE is a popular touring anatomy event which showcases how the human body works through a unique interactive live event.

The shows latest tour will stop at Walsall College on May 10 and 11 from 6pm to 10pm.

Tickets are priced at £40 and are also available to the general public.

For more information or to book tickets visit [www.thevitivexperience.co.uk/upcomingevents](http://www.thevitivexperience.co.uk/upcomingevents)

### Winnick in row on spending cuts

FURIOUS David Winnick says he is "absolutely disgusted" with the attitude of a Tory MP after he became embroiled in a row over Government spending cuts in the West Midlands.

The Walsall North Labour MP said New Forest West MP Desmond Swayne was "entirely wrong" to intervene after he raised a point of order in the House of Commons.

Mr Swayne criticised Mr Winnick for not raising the issue of Tory cuts earlier in the day during PMQs. "I could not raise the point in PMQs due to the large number of MPs who wanted to speak," Mr Winnick said.

### Firm's awards hope

BLAKEMORE Retail, part of Willenhall-based AF Blakemore & Son, is up for two national awards.

It is finalist in the independent retail chain and food-to-go retailer categories in The Grocer Gold Awards.

The winners will be announced in The Guildhall, London, on June 13.

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# Airport car park fees should not be sky high

ALONG with bogus charges for car hire, airport car parking charges are one of the great holiday rip-offs of modern times.

In a sensible world, there is no reason whatsoever why a multi-storey car park at an airport should cost more than in any major town or city. Logically, it ought to be less. After all, airports are large, spacious out-of-town sites, and nobody goes there for any reason other than to get a plane.

Yet, at Birmingham Airport for example, the official NCP car park charges £36 a day. For a two-week holiday, that could be more than the cost of the flight.

Little wonder then that people turn to the cheaper "valet parking" services, where a driver collects your car from the airport, parks it in a supposedly secure place for the duration of the trip, and then delivers it to you on your return.

But it now emerges that some of the operators have a slightly unusual definition of "secure parking". Lichfield couple David and Julia O'Neill returned from a fortnight in Vietnam to be hit with a parking ticket. It emerged that the valet parking operator, which charged them £100 for secure parking at Heathrow, had simply dumped their vehicle in a public car park, and not paid the correct fees. Worse still, an investigation revealed that hundreds of other cars had been left at public car parks, many with Heathrow barrier tickets on display, an open invitation to thieves who knew the owners were on holiday. Unbelievable.

■ ■ ■ ■

EDMUND King, the president of the AA, has come up with a novel idea to raise money for investment in Britain's overcrowded roads. Instead of screwing motorists for every last penny in road tax, fuel duty, and speeding fines, he suggests that business or even sports clubs could pay to have roads renamed after them. This has led to speculation that the M6 could be named after Manchester United. Not a bad idea, it is after all how most Manchester United fans get to Old Trafford. I think the M25 would probably be more appropriate, though.

■ ■ ■ ■

WHEN Jeremy Corbyn made his pre-election pledge of four extra bank holidays in honour of the UK's four patron saints, he no doubt thought it was a sure-fire winner. After all, who is going to object to some extra time off work, and what is there not to like about celebrating national unity?

Two problems. First of all, chances are that many employers will simply knock the extra four days off their workers' annual leave entitlement. Secondly, St David's Day is March 1, St Patrick's March 17, St George's April 23, and St David's November 30. So instead of being able to take time off at their own choosing, Mr Corbyn is telling people to take time off in winter. Good luck with that one.

■ ■ ■ ■

AFTER the trauma of her above-the-wrist am-

# Wiki co-founder hopes to ensure truth will out



Hand-clap – Kim Jong-Un, leader of North Korea, with his unique haircut



Hand-some – Thandie Newton as DCI Roz Huntley in *In the Line of Duty*



Handy – Wikipedia's Jimmy Wales, who is promising to eradicate the scourge of 'fake news'

# Jimmy's mission and that's a fact

I SUGGESTED a few days ago that a Manx kipper probably has no tail. A reader says this shortcoming is more than made up for by its third leg.

JIMMY Wales, co-founder of Wikipedia, is planning a news service called Wikitribune to fight fake news. Wales says it will deliver "high-quality, fact-based information." Well, good luck with that. It's just that after nearly 50 years in this game, I have never actually encountered neutral news, nor met a single unbiased journalist. Every reporter, columnist, commentator and pundit believes he or she occupies the exact epicentre of the very centre ground of rational thought. And every reader or viewer is equally convinced that the most accurate, insightful and unbiased reports are the ones that exactly reflect their own views. One man's "high quality, fact-based information" is another man's fascist / commie propaganda. Indeed, the only truly rational, considered and unerringly accurate column is this one.

MIND you, no matter how much one strives for accuracy, there are always heffalump traps. In this election campaign it's the Farron / Fallon thing. Tim Farron is the Lib-Dem leader. Sir Michael Fallon is the defence secretary. Tim is an evangelical Christian who talks to God. Michael is a career Tory who talks to a vicar's daughter. Confusion, confusion.

OUR changing language. A reader tells me his local GP surgery has a sign warning about a hitch with the electronic log-in system: "Please do not use the Jayex machine to arrive your child for Baby Clinic." This reminds me that my annual blood-pressure appointment is approaching. Next month I must arrive myself at the clinic. I must also arrive a urine sample.

AFTER the trauma of her above-the-wrist am-

## THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



putation in *In the Line of Duty* (BBC1), didn't DCI Roz Huntley (Thandie Newton) seem remarkably casual about asking her husband for a divorce? Quite off-handed.

IT WAS Woody Allen who famously observed: "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans." A report from Iraq this week illustrates perfectly the sheer unpredictable, unfair cussedness of life. Three Islamic State fighters had apparently had enough of fighting and decided to surrender. Naturally, they left their weapons behind as they marched toward the enemy lines. On the way, unarmed and unaware, they were attacked and gored to death by wild boars.

YOU know what this general election campaign is missing? A new social group or two. In previous elections, the parties have identified and fought for the support of Worcester Woman and Mondeo Man. This time, who will be banging on doors to secure the votes of seaside Strugglers, Lesbian Vapors and the Tring Transgenders?

AS attention turns once again to North Korea, the secretive state keeps its ultimate secret very secret indeed. The regime has murdered hundreds of Kim Jong-Un's ministers, officials and even relations. Yet his hairdresser survives. Bizarre.

SCIENTISTS at Cambridge believe a moth larva known as a wax worm may be able to rid the world of unwanted shopping bags thanks to its unique ability to digest plastic. I'm reminded

of the 1970s BBC drama *Doomwatch* which began with an airliner crashing after all the plastic on board suddenly melted. It emerged that a plastic-eating virus had escaped from a rogue laboratory. Younger readers may rejoice at today's promise of plastic-eating moths. Older readers will recall the horror on the pilot's face in *Doomwatch* as his control stick turned to goo in his hands . . .

MEANWHILE, ordinary moths are having a wonderful time thanks to the withdrawal, on safety grounds, of old-fashioned mothballs. My pure Merino sweater has emerged from the drawer looking like a string vest. A very expensive string vest.

BEAVERS, lynxes, wolves, elk? As the debate rages over whether to reintroduce big mammals into the British countryside, a friend is in despair. His small but perfectly trimmed lawn is his pride and joy, yet every night it is being ripped up and left horribly pot-holed. He would happily see the reintroduction of any animals – so long as they eat badgers.

THE online version of this column recently showed a car towing a caravan with the headline "What about the other mental conditions?" This was an unfortunate juxtaposition. I was not implying that caravanning is a psychological problem, or that there's anything bizarre about dragging your dirty crockery, unwashed clothes and half-full chemical toilets around the country while creating long traffic jams. Perfectly rational behaviour.

WHILE it may be magnanimous to guarantee EU workers the right to remain in the UK for all time, how does Labour's Brexit policy serve the interests of the Great British Public? 'Labour – Putting Foreigners First' is a bold campaign slogan but who's going to vote for it?

## TALKING POINT



# Now that's what I call a waste of money

WE'VE all seen the ads for them. Most have probably even got one. You've guessed it . . . compilation albums.

No, not a selection of a band's greatest hits, or a film or TV soundtrack.

I can even stomach the latest chart tunes from Now whatever number it is up to these days.

No, I refer to the pointless and completely random ones rolled out at those special times of the year, Mother's Day, Valentine's, Father's Day, for example. You know the sort I mean . . .

I can picture the advert now. "Treat your dad to The Best Stuck in Congestion on the M25 on a Friday Night Rush Hour Album in the World . . . Ever, featuring the likes of Baby You Can Drive My Car, Slow Down, Stuck in the Middle With You, Roadblock and other such classics."

They are billed as the ideal gift for whatever occasion it is, featuring all your mum's/dad's/girlfriend's/boyfriend's/whoever-it-may-be's favourites.

Really? How can whoever came up with the tracklist possibly know that?

Sure, like all such albums there may be one or two good ones on there. But how could anyone compiling the list know what I would want to listen to?

The only people I would assume benefit from this commercial enterprise are the artists, raking in their royalties, and the manufacturers.

Even the 'Now' franchise has surpassed itself with its latest offerings. Now That's What I Call A Song (?) – that's a matter of opinion – and Now That's What I Call Running. I've also seen advertised children's versions of current top tunes, Songs By Kids For Kids, apparently, and Sing Your Heart Out 2017. Exactly the pointless collections I'm talking about.

We all have CDs we like to listen to whenever the mood takes us, and it's nice to look back at ones bought by a loved one as a present. But, no offence, please do not spend your hard-earned on one of those No1 Songs For Hosting a Dinner Party or Barbecue compilations for me. Incidentally, the latter is probably the only album you will find Fire and Smoke Gets In Your Eyes just thrown together.

However, if you happen to know the favourite song of my top 15 or 20 acts and put that together, you've got yourself a deal – Now That's What I Call The Ultimate Bespoke Party Album In My Collection Ever.

I don't need anyone to tell me, or at least try to guess, what I would like to listen while ironing or out jogging.

Christmas, however? That's a different matter. Classic tunes (with the odd exception, of course), and ideal for getting everyone in the festive spirit. And if you don't appreciate a bit of Nat King Cole maybe it's time to roast your old CDs on an open fire instead.

Mind you, October is too early to play festive tunes in the shops though.

MARK SHIPP

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# All Manor of problems at the top

288 days in Manor Hospital, after being declared fit to leave! Older readers will be reminded of 'The Prisoner' TV series, or perhaps a very old Eagles song lyric from Hotel California - 'you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave'!

This is a shocking revelation as is the derisory responses from the responsible staff and health and social care system partners. The hospital, Walsall CCG and Walsall Council must realise they are wholly responsible for delivering on social care fund commitments and importantly working together on

behalf of the people of Walsall. Sadly, there is previous on all the records of the usual culprits. Ask yourself how can all the partners agree to work together, allocate funding to do so yet, when things go wrong it's always someone else's fault?

The health and social care community in Walsall is full of people who either talk a great deal and deliver very little or disappear when there is an impending crisis. We are all aware that across the sector performance levels at health services have been previously recorded as inadequate. De-

spite the Government and partners in health and social care allocating a huge budget for the very purpose of getting patients out of hospital back to home there has been a collective failure to achieve a result.

Blaming national decisions and actions where clearly local decisions and actions were key is the increasingly familiar trait of key players in a poor service. It is the way politicians and senior managers who should know better, pass the buck.

**COUNCILLOR DOUG JAMES**  
Walsall

## Gratitude on adopting MND charter

I AM writing as a resident of Walsall Borough to express my thanks and gratitude to members of Walsall Council who voted unanimously at the last full council meeting to adopt the MND Charter, which calls for access to fair and equitable treatment to those diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

By doing so they have joined the other 42 local authorities nationally who have adopted the charter and have also become the first in the Black Country to do so.

Adopting the charter means Walsall Council have pledged to ensure that those diagnosed with this often fatal disease have access to the best possible care available including effective support for carers, and where appropriate, to be allowed to die with dignity.

I would especially like to thank Councillor Ian Robertson the portfolio holder for health for his efforts.

**MICHAEL CRONOGUE**  
Bloxwich  
Walsall

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POST

Walsall Chronicle,  
Chronicle Editorial,  
51-53 Queen Street  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

### EMAIL

walsall.chron@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

## Reaping the rewards of hospital's closure

RE: front page story (Walsall Edition on April 24) of the patient who has 'bed blocked' for 288 days at the Manor Hospital.

About 12 years ago, the hospital trust, supported by the then Labour Government as well as Labour MPs, like Mr Winnick, decided to close down Goscote Hospital, whose 100 beds catered for elderly and frail patients, who went there to recuperate from strokes and other age related ailments rather than blocking beds at the Manor Hospital.

Furthermore, the then Labour Government, again supported by the local Labour MP, decided to allow the trust to 'pay through the nose' via a PFI deal to build a 'new' Manor hospital with less not more beds than the 'old one'.

That decision, together with the decision to close Goscote Hospital has resulted in an annual £12m bill that the trust needs to find to pay off the PFI debt for the next two decades at least, as well as the loss of Goscote Hospital and a severe reduction in the number of hospital beds available overall. If they had kept Goscote Hospital going, there would be no bed blocking problem at the Manor Hospital!

**PETE SMITH**  
Blakenall ward resident and former councillor

## Drivers are now just cash cows

NEW laws on speeding come into force, and once again it seems the motorist is now officially recognised as a cash cow.

By introducing a fining system related to your income, it means that we have a legal process of fining the motorist that is more than fining the drug dealer, and with the creeping 20mph speed limits, more and more motorists are going to fall foul to the system.

It's obvious that the motorist who's ripped off at the pump and conned at the garage, is now going to be persecuted on the road.

**S T VAUGHAN**  
Yardley Wood

*Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at [www.ipso.co.uk](http://www.ipso.co.uk). If you are unhappy with the accuracy of a story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES*

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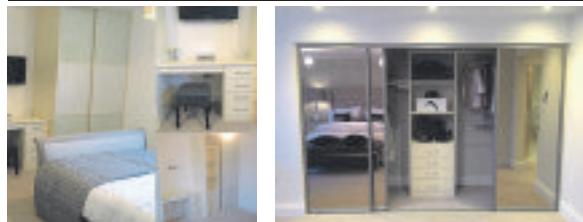


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# Victim says horror of axe attack will not go away

A GRANDFATHER who was struck on the head with an axe while trying to protect his home from burglars has spoken of his horror at the savage attack.

Nigel Jones, of Gretton Crescent, Aldridge, needed 15 stitches in his head after an intruder hit him with the weapon.

The 57-year-old had been relaxing in his lounge in the early hours of Saturday April 22, when three men smashed his kitchen door window with a brick.

Mr Jones grabbed a pool cue, which he leaves in his back room and confronted the gang, before one hit him on the shoulder with another brick.

The engineering lecturer, who works at Stourbridge College, was then smashed on the head with an axe by one of the masked men.

## Terrified

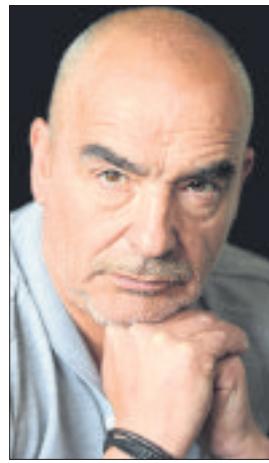
He was also hit with a baseball bat as he used the cue to try and protect himself. The raiders then fled.

He said: "I was lying on my back, completely in shock and I looked up to see that they were trying to break another window using an axe.

"I was terrified but I got up to grab the set of keys, which I always leave in my back door because I could see that they were trying to reach around to get them. For all of this time I was shouting, telling them to leave and they didn't say one word, they were just trying to get in."

While nothing was taken, the physical and mental scars will be with Mr Jones for a long time. He is also off work. He said: "It felt like a lifetime but it couldn't have been more than a couple of minutes."

"Nothing can prepare you for this, I was just doing what I thought was the right thing to do, it is a blur now but



Nigel Jones, who was hit by an axe

formation, these vermin need taking away so we can all live in a better place, this is just wrong.

"I think if the axe had gone 1mm deeper he wouldn't have been able to ring me for help."

West Midlands Police spokesperson Sharn Braich said: "Police were alerted to a suspected attempted burglary in Gretton Crescent, Aldridge, on Saturday April 22."

A 57-year-old man was disturbed in his home in the early hours of Saturday morning by three men who smashed his kitchen door window. He was released shortly after treatment and allowed home. Nothing was stolen from the house. Anyone with information is urged to call police on 101."



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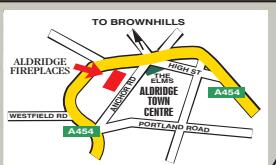
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# Mayor thanks 'exceptional volunteers'



Finalists at the Mayor's Civic Awards celebrate their success with the Mayor at the Council House

THE Mayor of Walsall took an opportunity to thank 'exceptional volunteers' from across the borough at her annual Civic Awards ceremony.

The awards evening was held at Walsall Council House, giving Mayor Kath Phillips a chance to thank those who go the extra mile giving up their time to help others.

Winners at this year's ceremony include police officer Gary Bampfield for his work with the homeless, Anne Lawrence for her work to help wildlife on Stubbers Green, the Bloxwich Cadets group leaders for their work with young people and Jag Poseloy for his fundraising efforts.

Each was presented with an award by the Mayor and the evening's host, comedy character Doreen Tipton.

The Mayor also got to present two special awards to people she had hand-picked for recognition; Derek Jordan of Blakenhall for his litter picking and Ray and Eunice Dolan, also of Blakenhall, for the continued success of their chess club.

Councillor Kath Phillips, Mayor of Walsall, said: "We had an absolutely brilliant evening and I am so glad that everyone got the chance to have their incredible work recognised."

## Row over centre sell-off

**COUNCIL** bosses have agreed to sell off a mental health centre amid angry objections from a group which uses the building.

Walsall Council's cabinet chiefs made the decision to dispose of Broadway North in Paddock, in a matter of minutes.

It provoked heated scenes among dozens of people who had turned up to voice their opposition to it.

The building, registered as an asset of community of value, is home to Adult Social Care services, Dudley and Walsall Mental Health NHS Trust and

Park Hall Community Association. The council is expecting to raise in more than half a million pounds from any sale of the property.

Three years ago a consortium of GPs expressed an interest to develop it into a medical centre. Now the Park Hall group, which provides various training schemes and luncheon clubs is facing eviction with nowhere to turn to.

Speaking on their behalf Barbara McCracken said at Thursday's meeting: "Once it is gone, it is gone. There is no library to close or leisure centre to refurbish. All we have got is this plot of land. We want the council to

carry on letting us use it for a peppercorn rent." But tempers flared on the night when Conservative councillors Ross Martin and Peter Washbrook, who represent Paddock, were denied the chance to speak on the matter having not formally registered their intention to do so.

The latter told Council Leader Sean Coughlan (Lab) he would be 'held in contempt' by residents for not listening to them.

Councillor Coughlan said: "The issue of being held in contempt is nothing new to this role as a cabinet. We have to make difficult decisions. That's where the power lies."

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# Flexibility key to Jennifer Ashe & Son's professional approach

## Commercial feature

Since opening the door to their new funeral home in Brownhills, Jennifer Ashe & Son Funeral Directors have been supporting families from all areas of the West Midlands.

Jennifer, son John and head funeral director and son-in-law Richard have been on hand to offer advice and support at what is for many a very traumatic time.

Funerals can be a massive expense and for those who have not planned ahead, they leave their loved ones often struggling to find the money to pay for the funeral expenses.

Jennifer, John and Richard were determined when they opened that they would not charge expensive rates for their professional services.

## Obituaries

With this in mind Jennifer Ashe & Son's funeral prices start at just £950 for its Silver Package, £1450 for the Gold Package and £1950 for the Platinum Package, (excluding 3rd party fees).

Funeral payments are broken down into two areas, the third party costs, such as crematorium, church, doctors, and minister's fees, and extra's like floral tributes and obituaries. The second part is the funeral director's fees for the work they carry out.

Whilst they can't change the third party fees Jennifer Ashe & Son are passionate about offering affordable funerals without compromising on standard of care or the funeral itself.

Some funeral directors have one set fee for their funeral packages, however, after doing its own research,



The frontage of the Jennifer Ashe & Son funeral director's premises in Brownhills



Head funeral director, Richard

they're being offered, or there may be flowers factored into the plan when in fact the family have their own florist that they want to use.

Most recently Jennifer Ashe & Son has also introduced an 'all inclusive package' priced at just £2600 for everything, from the funeral director's fees right through to the cremation costs, orders of service, and other finishing touches that mean families don't have to worry about the finer details.

In line with its commitment to being open and transparent all the firm's prices are published in the 'Our Prices' section of the 'Arranging a Funeral' page on its website: [www.jafunerals.co.uk](http://www.jafunerals.co.uk).

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CHRONICLE

# Students hit heights with Everest challenge

STUDENTS and teachers from a Black Country school have gone on an expedition to Everest base camp in Nepal to support the communities left devastated after the 2015 earthquake.

A total of seven students and two teachers from Walsall Academy, based on Lichfield Road in Bloxwich, Walsall, made the trip, and the school believes it is the first ever British state school to undertake an expedition to the base camp.

The students spent 21 days in total trekking to base camp at 5,436 metres – a total of 91 miles.

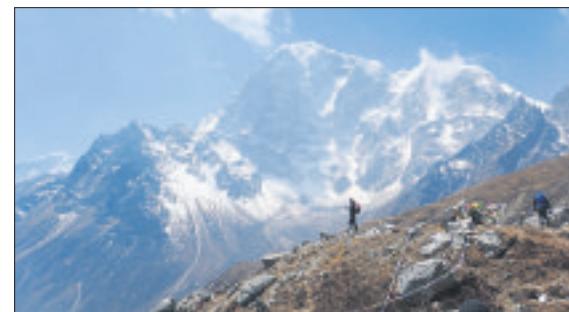
During their trek they visited the altitude medication centre at Periche and spent time with the Gurkha Everest 2017 team who played a pivotal role in the rescue and aid efforts to the Khumbu and Langtang regions in 2015 after the earthquake.

## Devastated

The final few days for the expedition were spent in Kathmandu visiting the Durbar Square – a UNESCO World Heritage Site which was devastated by the earthquake and is now the focus of a restoration project which will take many years using earthquake proof technologies.

Student Isaac Marlow, who at 15 was one of the youngest members on last month's expedition, said: "After many months of planning and fund-raising it was a relief to set foot in Kathmandu but I had no idea of the challenges that awaited the team.

"The trek up to base camp is not easy and it was only with the help of our Sherpa guides that we managed to all achieve our goal. I learnt so much about the people of Nepal and the re-



Walsall Academy trek to the Everest base camp



The team of intrepid explorers pose for the camera

cent challenges that they faced but I also learnt a great deal about myself and what I am capable of.

"Altitude made the last few miles to base camp a massive hurdle but as we approached Paul Oakenfold, DJ, was on the decks completing the World's Highest ever rave and we danced and cheered, it is a moment and feeling that I will never forget."

Jon Clarke, the shadow headteacher at Walsall Academy, added: "It is a massive achievement for anyone to reach Everest base camp but especially a group of young people from Bloxwich. This group is a role model for others and clearly demonstrate that the youth of today have the skills needed to complete and succeed in huge challenges."

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Walsall's Manager Jon Whitney tees off during the contest



Stan Petrov and John Hartson joke around



First team players get set for the day to raise money for charity



Chris Nicholls and Martin O'Connor at Walsall Golf Club



Former Walsall winger John Hodge



Current Saddlers midfielder, Kieron Morris, tries his luck on the putting green

## Saddlers chip in for charity

**WALSALL** stars past and present took to the fairways to raise funds for leading cancer charity, The John Hartson Foundation.

Former Baggies striker Hartson was diagnosed with testicular cancer back in 2009 with the disease going on to spread to his lungs and brain.

But the Welshman defied the odds to beat the condition and has since raised more than £700,000 to help

men who find themselves in a similar position.

Last Wednesday he was joined by a host of Saddlers stars including boss Jon Whitney and players Jason McCarthy, Scott Laird, George Dobson, Liam Kinsella and Eoghan O'Connell at a fundraiser at Walsall Golf Club. Former players Michael Ricketts and Martin O'Connor also attended as well as ex-managers Kenny Hibbitt and Kenny Mower.

"It's great to be able to raise

awareness of John's charity," Whitney said.

"There has been a really good turnout. We've got players from the first-team squad. Ian Sharps (coach) is playing but Neil Cutler bottled it.

### Commercial

"It's a great cause and something we really need to highlight and it's fantastic to see John and Stan Petrov because they have both done so much for charity."

Former Walsall midfielder Wayne

Thomas – who is now commercial manager at the Banks's Stadium – said he hopes the golf day will become an annual event.

"It was our inaugural golf day and hopefully it was the first of many," he said.

"When I was a player we had a great golf day and it was something that when I came back I wanted to get going again."

"Teams play with a current player or manager. We had 18 ex or current

players plus John Hartson and Stan Petrov.

"The players have been fully supportive of it."

"And you can't underestimate how much the commercial partners and fans are looking forward to having three or four hours with a player."

"Walsall Football Club has a great relationship with Walsall Golf Club because we sponsor the disabled golf events they run – so it was great to hold this there as well."

## Drivers dogged by tailbacks as pooch on loose

A DOG on the loose on the M5 caused tailbacks up to junction 3 as motorists were stuck in traffic for more than an hour.

Images posted on social media showed traffic officers attempting to catch the dog, which was described as an Alsatian.

Peter Wright, who is a lorry driver from Ludlow, was stuck in the traffic near junction 2 Oldbury and junction 1 West Bromwich – when he managed to catch the wandering dog.

He explained: "As I got on the motorway they had put the traffic officers there and signs up saying that there were animals on the loose."

"I was expecting it to be horses or something like that but then I spotted this dog running around my lorry."

"I got out and managed to find this blue lead in my lorry and tied it around his neck."

"He was quite a big dog and similar to an Alsatian and I managed to stand with him by the side of the motorway until the motorway patrol van arrived."

"He was very friendly but a little tired from running up and down I think."

Highways England tweeted throughout the incident.

They said: "Great news! Dog has been safely caught, preparations are being made to release the traffic #M5, both ways J2 + J1. Long delays."

"The dog's ok, we've given him some fuss and he's safely off the network."

## Event to showcase anatomy at college

A UNIQUE live experience will offer pupils from across Walsall an in-depth understanding of the human anatomy and physiology.

Anatomy Lab LIVE is a popular touring anatomy event which showcases how the human body works through an interactive live event. The latest tour will stop at Walsall College on May 10 and 11 from 6-10pm.

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For more information or to book tickets visit [www.thevivitexperience.co.uk/comingevents](http://www.thevivitexperience.co.uk/comingevents)

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# Lucky escape for teenage couple in caravan blaze

A TEENAGE couple had a lucky escape when their caravan was swept by fire in the early hours of last Tuesday.

Fortunately they were woken by the blaze and fled before the caravan, which was not fitted with a smoke detector, was engulfed in flames.

Fire crews from Bloxwich and Aldridge Stations arrived at Woodlands caravan site in Lime Lane, Pelsall around 4.30am.

Bloxwich Crew Commander Matthew Sullivan said afterwards: "The caravan was well alight when we arrived and the flames were threatening two brick built launderette buildings on either side.

"The fire was already melting the fascia and was threatening the roof but we managed to stop it spreading. The two people who were sleeping in the caravan had a very lucky escape. One needed treatment at the scene for the effects of smoke inhalation but did not need to go to hospital."

## Gutted

Crews were at the scene for around 90 minutes. West Midlands Fire Service have said that the blaze that gutted the caravan is being treated as accidental although the precise cause has still to be established.

In recent months, there have been a spate of caravan fires in the Walsall area, with a number of arson incidents.

Last month, two youths were arrested after a suspected arson attack in Pelsall.

The caravan was believed to have been used on a building site on Spring Lane as a catering van for builders, however no-one was inside it at the time. The flames also spread to a nearby garden fence and shed.



The caravan blaze under way, which sparked the call-out



The aftermath of the blaze which was left gutted

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# Historic Wolves cup winner's medal to go under hammer



The 1908 Wolves squad that won the FA cup, Billy Wooldridge is second row, fourth from left

A RARE piece of Wolves' history from the club's 1908 FA Cup final win is being sold at auction.

The 15 carat gold winner's medal was presented to Billy Wooldridge, the then Wolves' captain, following the 3-1 victory over Newcastle United.

More than a century later it is expected to fetch between £6,000 and £8,000 when it goes under the hammer next month.

The victory was the club's second in the FA Cup and came 46 years before Wolves were first crowned First Division champions. The medal is in a good condition and an engraving on the back features

## MEMORY LANE

By Robert Cox

the skipper's name. It currently belongs to Shirley Burn, from Lichfield, who said she bought it from Wooldridge's grandson in 1979.

"My late husband and I had a shop in Birmingham and one day Billy Wooldridge's grandson came and said 'do you want it, I have decided to sell it,'" she explained.

"It was quite sad really. My late husband was a lifelong fan and he tried to talk the guy out of it. He told him it was such an important piece of history. But the man would not be convinced and we bought it off him." After Mrs Burn's late

husband died in 1994 she loaned it to Wolves and for 21 years it held pride of place in the club's museum. But now the 57-year-old has decided to sell the medal, which comes complete with its original box.

Billy Wooldridge was born in Netherton in 1878 and went on to make 356 appearances for Wolves, scoring 90 goals in 12 years at Molineux.

An entry in 'The Wolves' encyclopaedia published in 1989, reads: "Billy was a wonderful servant to Wolves – a player who was never flurried, never overawed, and one who never gave less than 100 per cent effort out on the park, whether performing in defence or attack. He played centre-half be-

tween Hunt and Bishop in the 1908 FA Cup Final, skippering Wolves to a memorable victory. With his thick black moustache, 'Wooly' was a commanding figure in the team."

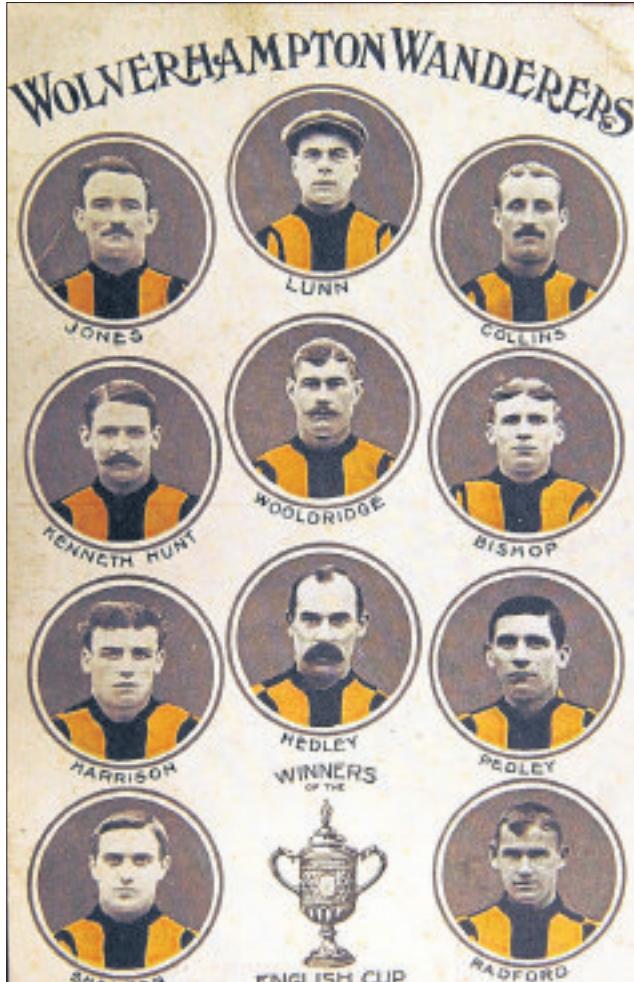
When Wolves won the FA Cup in 1908 there were only two divisions in English football, each with 20 teams. Cup favourites Newcastle finished fourth in the first division and Wolves finished ninth in division two.

The club had first lifted the trophy in 1893 and have won the competition on a total of four occasions with further success in 1949 and 1960.

Billy Wooldridge's winner's medal will go under the hammer through Graham Budd Auctions at Sotheby's in London on May 16. Mr Budd, said: "It is a very rare medal and hopefully it will make a good price."



The rear of Billy's 1908 FA Cup final medal



A postcard of the victorious 1908 Wolves team featuring captain Billy Wooldridge

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# The Ticket

## A GRAND NIGHT OUT FOR EVITA

INSIDE

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Another suitcase, another hall –  
Evita hits the Grand stage



Leading lights – Emma Hatton and Gian Marco Schiaretti

# Don't cry for me, Wolverhampton

**I**t took Emma Hatton approximately 0.1 seconds to make a decision when she was asked to play the lead role in Evita. The actress and singer, best known for playing Elphaba in the West End production of Wicked, jumped at the chance to lead the line.

Having starred in major musicals, playing Donna in Dreamboats and Petticoats, she was thrilled to playing the lead in one of the greatest musicals of all.

Bill Kenwright's production of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd-Webber's Evita is on the road following its smash hit run at London's Dominion Theatre. It will reach Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre on Tuesday and play until May 13.

Telling the story of Eva Perón, wife of former Argentine dictator Juan Perón, Evita follows Eva's journey from humble beginnings through to extraordinary wealth, power and iconic status. She is ultimately heralded as the 'spiritual leader of the nation' by the Argentine people.

Starring two of musical theatre's most outstanding leading performers; Emma and Gian Marco Schiaretti, who is embarking on his first UK tour having played the title role in Disney's production of Tarzan, audiences can anticipate a five-star performance.

Evita has more than 20 major awards to its credit and the Oscar-winning film version starred Madonna and Antonio Banderas. It features some of the most iconic songs in musical theatre, including Don't Cry For Me Argentina, On This Night of a Thousand Stars, You Must Love Me, and Another Suitcase in Another Hall.

Emma has enjoyed picking up

the baton and enjoys every performance. It's one of the most iconic roles in musical theatre. It didn't take me very long to say yes to that. I've never done anything like this before.

"I'd never seen a production of it but had watched the film many years ago. It was nice to come into the project. I knew the bare bones of it and had a grasp of what it was about. I've had the opportunity to learn so much about her story and the Argentinian history but I wasn't familiar with a lot of it before."

That knowledge gap proved advantageous to Emma, who was able to originate her character from scratch – rather than trying to imitate another actress's performance.

"Because I haven't seen any of the productions, I don't have anything else to go on. I'm stepping into quite big shoes with the people who have played it before. But it would be detrimental to think too much about what they've done. I don't want to be caught up on others, I'd lose my confidence slightly. By approaching it myself, it's completely my own take."

#### FICTIONAL

Emma has led a varied career, playing in Dreamboats, We Will Rock You, Wicked and more. Her roles in Wicked and We Will Rock You won her a slew of Award nominations. But she's enjoyed getting her teeth into a real character, rather than a fictional one.

"I think it's a very well known show that was very well written and is well loved. To portray a real life character is a privilege and something to be respected. And both vocally and in terms of acting, it's been a massive challenge. I took the role as much to see whether I could do it or not, I like a challenge. It's something very different to what I've done before. From a performing perspective, it's important for people to see I'm versatile. Hopefully that will lead to a longer career."

*I took the role to see whether I could do it or not... I like a challenge*

The responses from theatre audiences up and down the country has been ecstatic. Emma's been revelling in the joy that her characterisation has bought. "I didn't realise how loved this show was."

"The audiences have been very full houses and seem to really love the show. You feel that warmth from the show. Long may that last."

And yet Emma will be keen to do something different at the end of Evita's present run. While she lives and breathes every moment, she's tied to the diversity that's present in her career and relishes taking on different roles.

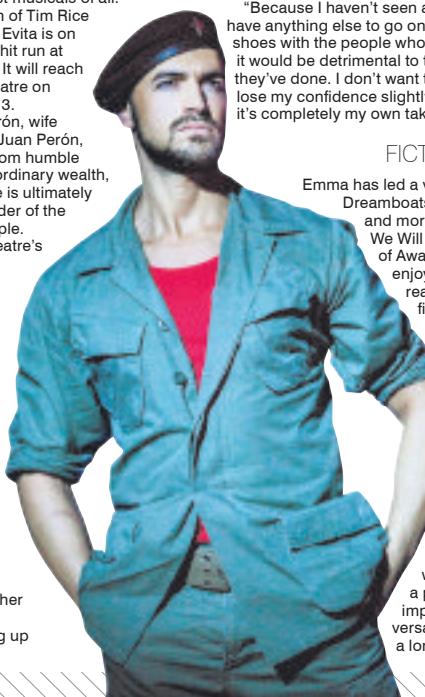
"I was the original cast for Dreamboats. I got to work with the writers and worked closely with them on the characterisation and the script. The music of that era was so gorgeous and then moving on to do We Will Rock You, then Wicked, gave me the opportunity to do something different. I enjoy that."

"I think there's a difference between being in the West End and being on the road. The routine is very different and the discipline has to be a lot stronger on tour because of the travelling and what it takes out of your body. To be on the road, you're living out of a suitcase and are away from your family. You need more strength of character. You're away from loved ones and your own bed. But you get to go to your beautiful cities and see beautiful theatres. And every part of the UK and Europe has a very different vibe."

"I hadn't toured for a while so I was ready to get on the road and show the UK what we're about."

Another suitcase another hall. Emma's role in Evita is the classic case of life imitating art.

For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.



The all-inclusive Tommy cast



## Rock on, Tommy as musical makes return

The Who's epic, award-winning musical, *Tommy* rocks into Birmingham Repertory Theatre later this month.

Directed by Kerry Michael, it features two new songs written exclusively for the new tour by The Who's guitarist and lyricist Pete Townshend.

Based on the iconic 1969 rock concept album, *Tommy* is the tale of the pinball-playing boy, an exhilarating story of hope, healing, and the human spirit which has entertained for more than 40 years.

The cast of 22 includes Peter Straker as the Acid Queen, alongside an inclusive cast of deaf and disabled and non-disabled actors.

The production will feature a new version of *Amazing Journey* to open the show and a brand new song, *Acid Queen 2* for Act Two alongside classics *Tommy Can You Hear Me, I'm Free, See Me Feel Me*

and *Pinball Wizard*. The production follows young Tommy after he witnesses the murder of his father by his mother's lover. Traumatised, he chooses to stop communicating with the outside world as he grows up in post-Second World War England, where he suffers abuse from relatives and others in the wider community. But as an adolescent, Tommy's life begins to change when he finds salvation in playing pinball.

In this new staging every performance features a creative use of audio description, captioning and British Sign Language interpretation.

*Tommy* plays at Birmingham Repertory Theatre from May 17 to 27 with show times at 7.30pm Monday to Saturday and matinees at 2pm on Thursday and Saturday. Tickets start from £15. Book online at [birmingham-rep.co.uk](http://birmingham-rep.co.uk) or via the box office on 0121 236 4455.

## Richardson the daddy of comics



With a two-month old daughter, stand-up comic Jon Richardson admits that life at home is very chaotic at the minute.

So the proud new father believes this is the perfect time to be going on tour. "Gigs have become very cathartic for me, as things are so hectic at home," he said.

For him, being on stage is now the equivalent of going to the pub or the cinema.

"Our baby is only two months old, so it's obviously the perfect time for me to be leaving home for several weeks," said the funnyman.

"It has to be said, I'm not terribly popular at home. But I'm assuming that by the time I get back home, my daughter will be toilet-trained, capable of dressing herself and

able to drive." Richardson's new show, *Old Man* – a follow up to *Funny Magnet* and *Nidiot* – is packed with reflections on the trials and tribulations of new fatherhood.

He even discloses some of the more bizarre incidents that have occurred since the new arrival.

One of Jon's main worries is that his daughter will grow up resembling him. "What I'm dreaming is raising her to be like me," he says. "If I hear her saying, 'I can't eat that chip because it's touched those baked beans,' I'll know she got too much of me in her!"

He adds: "I'm determined not to talk about my baby in a way that's alienating.

But it's been such a big change in my life that I can't not talk about

it. It's also nice to have something new to stress about."

The comedian, who has starred on such TV shows as 8 out of 10 Cats Does Countdown, *Have I Got News For You*, *Live At The Apollo*, Channel 4's *Comedy Gala Live* At The 02 and more recently *Taskmaster* on Dave has been attracting a host of critical plaudits and performs at Birmingham's Hippodrome tonight (Thursday).

But, much as he loves touring, Richardson reveals: "I'll have a break over the summer. People would rather be out in the sun than inside listening to a whingeing moron!"

For tickets, call 0844 338 5000 or visit [www.birminghamhippodrome.com](http://www.birminghamhippodrome.com)

## Adam ready to Stand And Deliver



New Romantic 1980s heartthrob is back in the leather jacket and ready to Stand And Deliver at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, with back-to-back gigs on May 12 and 13.

The King of the Wild Frontier will be performing the hits, such as *Ant Music* and *Prince Charming* on his Anthems: The Singles Tour, and also promises a few lesser known tracks for the hardcore fans and some of his personal favourites.

## Give your Verdict on courtroom drama

Former Casualty star Clive Mantle and Jack Shepherd of *Wycliffe* fame star in courtroom thriller *The Verdict* at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre this week.

Made famous by the Oscar-nominated *Sidney Lumet* film starring Paul Newman, Charlotte Rampling and James Mason, it opened on Tuesday and runs until Saturday. Book on 01902 429212 or at [www.grandtheatre.co.uk](http://www.grandtheatre.co.uk)

Elsewhere, comedians Omid Djalili and Micky Flanagan perform in Birmingham. Djalili is at the Symphony Hall tomorrow night (Friday), with Flanagan at the Barclaycard Arena from May 18 to 20. Also in the Second City, the Robert Cray Band performs on Sunday night, Procul Harum are at the Town Hall on May 11 and Adam Ant at the Symphony Hall on May 12 and 13.

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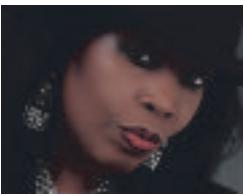
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## CHOICE



## Peter Capaldi

## Doctor Who (BBC1, 7.20pm)

Bill and some of her friends decide to move in together, and find what seems to be the perfect house. However, the absurdly cheap rent, and a decidedly creepy landlord (played by guest star David Suchet) suggest that domestic bliss might not yet be on the cards. The Doctor believes something is seriously wrong with his assistant's new home, plagued as it is with strange drafts and oddly creaky floorboards, and that's without considering the ominous tower found at the very heart of the building – one that doesn't seem to have an entrance. Peter Capaldi and Pearl Mackie star, with Matt Lucas.

## BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites. (R) 12.00 Football Focus. 1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Usain Bolt: The Final Chapter. 1.45 Athletics: Diamond League Qatar Highlights. 2.45 Bargain Hunt. (R) 3.45 Escape to the Country. (R) 4.30 Final Score. 5.30 Who Dares Wins. 6.10 News. 6.20 Regional Programme. 6.30 Pointless Celebrities. Richard Park, David Grant, Ben Forster, Danielle Boulle, Nina Myskow, Jamie Raven, and Ashleigh and Pudsey take part in a talent-show themed edition of the quiz. 7.20 Doctor Who. Bill moves into a new house with her friends, complete with creaking floorboards, a creepy landlord, and a strangely inaccessible tower at its heart. Guest starring David Suchet. 8.05 Casualty. Louise confronts Jez about his infidelity, but when he comes clean and reveals his secret squeeze, Mickey, she is left stunned. A revelation about the events of the previous week leaves Ethan reeling, and Charlie makes it is personal mission to restore the spirits of everyone in the ED. 9.00 Michael McIntyre: Happy & Glorious. A chance to see a show from the popular stand-up star's 2015 tour of the UK and Ireland, recorded as-live at the O2 in London. Returning to a venue he has visited 27 times in the past, more than any other artist in the world, Michael showcases his particular brand of wit, taking aim once again at some of the absurdities of everyday life. 10.00 BBC News: Weather. National Lottery Update. 10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Swansea City v Everton at the Liberty Stadium and Hull City v Sunderland at the KCOM Stadium. 11.40 Murder in Successville. A radioactive monster seems to be on the loose in Successville, and Di Sleet enlists the aid of new assistant Lorraine Kelly to get to the bottom of the mystery. 12.10 Film: Flatliners. (1990) 2.00 Weather for the Week Ahead. 2.05 BBC News.

## BBC2

6.25 Film: That's Entertainment! III. (1994) 8.20 Talking Pictures: Musicals. (R) 9.05 Film: Silk Stockings. (1957) 11.00 Monty Hall's Great Hebridean Escape. (R) 12.00 Great British Menu. (H) 12.30 Great British Menu. (R) 1.00 Great British Menu. (R) 1.30 Film: 4 for Texas. (1963) Conner, Weston, starring Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra. 3.20 Trust Me, I'm A Vet. (R) 4.20 Flug It! (R) 4.55 Gardeners' World. (R) 5.25 Springwatch in Japan: Cherry Blossom Time. (R) 6.25 Japan's Northern Wilderness. Part one of two. Naturalist Steve Backshall and two-time Olympic gold medal-winning rower Helen Glover explore the landscapes and culture of northern Japan. 7.20 Trump on Culture: Brave New World? Alastair Sooke visits the US to investigate what impact President Donald Trump's plans to scrap federal funding for the arts might have on the nation's cultural landscape. 8.00 Grand Tours of Scotland. Paul Merton explores the rise of the seaside as a popular tourist destination, travelling from St Andrews via the Firth of Forth to North Berwick and Edinburgh. Last in the series. 8.30 Dad's Army. The men of the Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard platoon take charge when a large naval gun is delivered to the church hall. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R) 9.00 Film: Nightcrawler. (2014) Premier. A cynical petty crook is inspired when he sees a freelance camera crew, and decides to go into business filming crime scenes and accidents, then selling the footage to news broadcasters. His determination to stay ahead of the competition leads him down a dark path as his methods become increasingly ruthless. Crime drama, starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Rene Russo and Bill Paxton. 10.50 QI XL. Jimmy Carr, Aisling Bea and Danni Bhoy compete alongside resident scientist Alan Davies, as question master Stephen Fry muddles through the midlife show of the middle series. 11.35 Versailles; (R) Inside Versailles. 12.35 Film: The Big Kahuna. (1999) 2.00 This Is BBC Two.

## ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street. (R) 6.15 Soothing. (R) 6.35 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 6.40 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.50 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.55 Dino Dan: The Marvelous Adventures of Dino Dan. (R) 7.30 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 8.25 NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) 8.25 ITV News: 8.30 Weekend. 9.25 ITV Racing: The Opening Show. 10.20 Judge Rinder. (R) 11.20 Tipping Point. (R) 12.20 ITV News: Weather. 12.25 Big Bheads. (R) 1.30 ITV Racing: Live from Newmarket. Coverage of today's race meetings at Newmarket and Goodwood. 4.00 Paul O'Grady: The Love of Dogs. (R) 4.30 Catchphrase. (R) 5.15 Britain's Got More Talent. 6.15 Regional Programme; Weather. 6.25 ITV News: Weather. 6.45 Take Me Out. A firefighter, a barber, a test driver and a gym instructor enter the "love lift" in the hope of impressing 30 single women and winning a date – but they must first get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval. 8.00 Britain's Got Talent. Another selection of would-be stars are given a chance to demonstrate their unique talents, as the fourth round of auditions gets underway. As always, Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Alesha Dixon will beckon each act into the spotlight, where they must show off their skills to the best of their ability if they are to secure the panel's attention and win a place in the next round of the contest. However, for those performers whose skills capture the hearts of either the judges, or Ant and Dec, a simple tap of the golden buzzer could see them progress straight through to the live shows. 9.15 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show. New series. Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness remake Hollywood movies, and begin by casting Jessica Hynes, Larry Lamb, John Barrowman and Kimberly Wyatt in Dirty Dancing. 9.45 Film: The Year-Old Virgin. (2005) Comedy, starring Steve Carell and Catherine Keener. 10.45 ITV News: Weather. 11.05 Film: The 40 Year-Old Virgin. (2005) Continued. 12.15 Jackpot247. 3.00 Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) 3.50 ITV Nightscreen.

## CHANNEL 4

6.15 Mobil 1 The Grid. 6.40 Motor Sport: British GT. 7.10 The King of Queens. (R) 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.25 Frasier. (R) 8.55 Frasier. (R) 9.25 The Big Bang Theory. 9.55 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.25 The Simpsons. (R) 11.30 The Simpsons. (R) 12.00 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) 12.55 Come Dine with Me. (R) 1.55 Come Dine with Me. (R) 2.30 Come Dine with Me. (R) 3.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 3.35 A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) 4.35 Big House, Little House. 5.35 Location, Location, Location. (R) 6.30 Channel 4 News. 7.00 The Restoration Man. George Clarke revisits Dave and Margaret Hedley for a second time, hoping to see what progress has been made on their ambitious plan to restore a derelict 17th-century water mill in Northumberland. After eight years toiling away at the project, Dave and Margaret have seen off historic levels of flooding and a devastating illness, and have hand-built a working replica of the mill's old water wheel. In the threshing barn, the pair's impeccable restoration work is on full display, and George discovers how the water wheel is about to take on a new purpose for the 21st century. 8.00 Walking Through Time. Historian Dr Tim Henridge and Professor Adrian Lister visit Shropshire to discuss analysis into the remains of five mammoths found in a quarry in 1986. (R) 9.00 Film: The Faul in Our Stars. (2014) Premier. Indianapolis teenager Hazel has terminal thyroid cancer and attends a patients' support group, where she meets fellow teen Gus, who lost a leg to the disease. The two fall in love and a shared passion for books leads them on a literary pilgrimage to Amsterdam in search of reclusive author Peter van Houten. Romantic drama based on the bestselling novel by John Green, starring Shailene Woodley, Ansel Elgort, Laura Dern and Willem Dafoe. 11.35 Film: Ghost. (1990) Romantic fantasy, starring Demi Moore. 1.45 The 80s: Ten Years That Changed Britain. (R) 3.05 Hollyoaks. (R) 5.05 Jamie's Comfort Food. (R) 12.15 SuperCasino. 3.10 Film: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt. (2009)

## CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) 10.35 Access. (R) 10.40 Caught on Camera. (R) 11.00 Police Interceptors. (R) 12.00 On Benefits: The Bargain Queen. (R) 1.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 2.00 On Benefits: Cash-Strapped Couples. (R) 3.00 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) 4.00 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) 5.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 6.00 The agents chase £4,500 owed to a shipping company in Lancashire, and in east London, the officers try to collect over £2,000 owed to a housing association. (R) 6.55 5 News Weekend. 7.00 NCIS: Los Angeles. The FBI's domestic terrorist task force steps in to help the team when a former marine is suspected of creating a chemical bomb. 7.45 NCIS. A US Navy Public Affairs Officer is killed, and when the team takes up the case, both the man's wife and his mistress emerge as potential suspects. Each woman offering a very different take on the chain of events that led to the murder, and the investigators are forced to decide which of the two is telling the truth. Meanwhile, DiNozzo's father comes to the aid of a homeless woman, who makes a surprising claim about his relationship with her. Guest starring Robert Wagner. 8.45 Film: Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves. (1991) An English nobleman returns home from the crusades to find his father has been killed and his local people are oppressed by the tyrannical rule of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Branded an outlaw, he recruits a group of bandits to fight for justice and protect the downtrodden. Action adventure, starring Kevin Costner, Alan Rickman and Morgan Freeman. Edited for violence and language. Includes a 5 News Update at 9.45pm. 11.45 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Action from the final fixtures of the regular season in League Two, including Luton Town v Morecambe, Hartlepool United v Doncaster Rovers, and Newport County v Notts County. 12.15 SuperCasino. 3.10 Film: Beyond a Reasonable Doubt. (2009) 14.00 Close

## DIGITAL

BBC Four 7.00 Dan Cruickshank: At Home with the British 8.00 The BBC at War 9.00 Hinterland 10.30 Top of the Pops: 1983 11.45 Genesis: Together & Apart 1.20 TOTP2: Genesis 2.05 Prog at the BBC 3.05 Sounds of the Eighties 3.30 Close

## ITV2

11.05 Britain's Got Talent 12.25 Britain's Got More Talent 1.25 Take Me Out 2.40 Take Me Out – The Gossip 3.40 You've Been Framed 4.10 Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) 5.10 FYI Daily 5.15 Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) 7.25 FYI Daily 7.45 Film: Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009) 7.45 FYI Daily 8.15 Film: Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009) 8.15 Film: Gold: Moon Talent 10.20 Celebrity Juice 11.20 Family Guy 12.50 Film: Delivery Man (2013) 1.55 FYI Daily 2.00 Film: Delivery Man (2013) 2.45 The Hot Desk: The Vamps 2.55 Teleshopping 5.55 ITV2 Nightscreen

## ITV3

11.00 British Superbike Championship Highlights 12.05 Road Racing Series 1.10 Film: Superman (1978) 2.10 FYI Daily 2.15 Film: Superman (1978) 4.05 The Big Bang Theory 3.05 Film: Stars 6.05 Storage Wars 7.05 The Sweet 3.05 Better Late Than Never 9.00 Film: Lethal Weapon 4 (1988) 10.05 FYI Daily 10.10 Film: Lethal Weapon 4 (1988) 11.30 Film: American Gangster (2007) 12.30 FYI Daily 12.35 Film: American Gangster (2007) 2.35 The Car Chasers 3.00 Teleshopping

## ITV4

11.00 British Superbike Championship Highlights 12.05 Road Racing Series 1.10 Film: Superman (1978) 2.10 FYI Daily 2.15 Film: Superman (1978) 4.05 The Big Bang Theory 3.05 Film: Stars 6.05 Storage Wars 7.05 The Sweet 3.05 Better Late Than Never 9.00 Film: Lethal Weapon 4 (1988) 10.05 FYI Daily 10.10 Film: Lethal Weapon 4 (1988) 11.30 Film: American Gangster (2007) 12.30 FYI Daily 12.35 Film: American Gangster (2007) 2.35 The Car Chasers 3.00 Teleshopping

## E4

11.00 The Goldbergs 12.30 Film: Astro Boy (2009) 1.25 Film: The Net (1995) 4.30 The Big Bang Theory 9.00 Film: Hanna (2011) 11.10 Gogglebox 1.20 Rude Tube 2.25 Tattoo Fixers 3.20 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 4.05 How I Met Your Mother 4.45 Black-ish 5.05 Film 4 11.00 The Ruggrats Movie (1999) 1.00 Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) 2.40 Short Circuit (1986) 4.40 A Thousand Words (2012) 6.35 Mrs Doubtfire (1993) 9.00 Aliens (1986) Sci-Fi thriller sequel, starring Sigourney Weaver. 12.05 The Woman in Black: Angel of Death (2014) Horror sequel, starring Helen McCrory and Jeremy Irvine. 2.00 American Mary (2012) 4.00 Close

Quote: JGRT

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## SUNDAY'S TV MAY 7

## CHOICE



Samantha Spiro

## BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. **2.15** The Great Nostalgia. (R) **3.15** Escaping the Country. (R) **4.00** Points of View. **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.50** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

**6.00** **Countryfile**. The latest agricultural developments, including reports on issues affecting country communities and insights into the life of the rural families.

**7.00** **Antiques Roadshow**. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Ightham Mote, a medieval manor near Sevenoaks. Objects brought in to be valued include a gold ring containing a lock of Lord Byron's hair, a pair of Chinese paintings, and a collection of postcards from 1916 that reveal the story of how a British POW sent secret messages back to his family.

**8.00** **Babs**. Biopic of Barbara Windsor, following her life between 1943 and 1993, including her evacuation in the Second World War, her rise to fame and her marriage to gangster Ronnie Knight.

**9.30** **Mrs Brown's Boys**. Agnes tries to make friends with Dermot's mother-in-law Hilary ahead of the baby's birth, and suggests they go out to dinner together. However, the evening comes to an abrupt end for the two feuding matriarchs when expectant mum Maria goes into labour, and the Browns are forced to rush her to hospital. Comedy, written by and starring Brendan O'Carroll. (R)

**10.00** **BBC News**.

**10.20** **Regional Programme**.

**10.30** **Match of the Day**. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Liverpool v Southampton at Anfield and Arsenal v Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium. The Saints are set for a mid-table finish, but the other three teams involved needed three points to boost their chances of finishing in the top four.

**11.40** **The Women's Football Show**. Tina Daheley and guests reflect on the weekend's FA Women's Super League Spring Series action.

**12.15** **Weather for the Week Ahead**. **12.20** BBC News.

## BBC2

**6.15** **A to Z of TV Gardening**. (R) **7.00** The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.45** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.15** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.45** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** The Great British Bake Off. **12.15** The Great British Menu. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Rugby Highlights. **2.00** Equestrian: Badminton Horse Trials. Live coverage of the three-day eventing competition. **4.00** Rowing World Cup. Live coverage of the opening meeting of the season from Belgrade. **5.30** Fog It! (R) **5.45** Film: The Terminal. (2004) Comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

**8.00** **Mexico: Earth's Festival of Life**. New series. The first of three programmes about the wildlife, landscape and culture in different areas of the country explores the Sierra Madre mountains, and reveals how this rugged landscape has shaped the nation. This chain of peaks includes several volcanoes and is home to a wide variety of animals, including black bears, monarch butterflies, orchid bees and quetzals. The programme also visits the ruins of an ancient Aztec shrine and the blue agave plant which grows in the mountains is used in making tequila.

**9.00** **Dara and Ed's Road to Mandalay**. New series. Dara O'Briain and Ed Bryant travel South East Asia, travelling more than 3,000 miles from Melaka to Mandalay as they forge their way to the historic city of Mandalay. The comedians begin their journey in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, where they watch a beauty pageant for chickens and join a mass cycle ride through the city.

**10.00** **Film: Kajaki**. (2014) Premiere. A group of paratroopers are pushed to their limits while trying to find a safe route out of a minefield in Afghanistan. Fact-based thriller, starring David Elliot.

**11.40** **Film: The Reluctant Fundamentalist**. (2012) A Pakistani professor tells a journalist how he was driven to radical politics in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Drama, starring Riz Ahmed and Liev Schreiber.

**1.40** **Sign Zone: Question Time**. Topical debate from Wigan. (R) **2.40** Holby City. (R) **3.40** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes.

## ITV

**6.00** **CITV: Bottom Knocker Street**. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Soothing. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Marvel Monsters Assemble. (R) **7.30** Thunderbirds Are Go! (R) **7.55** NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Countrywide. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.00** ITV News: Weather.

**12.10** **Britain's Got Talent**. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newmarket. Coverage of today's race meetings at Newmarket and Hamilton Park. **4.05** Film: Diamonds Are Forever. (1971) James Bond spy adventure, starring Sean Connery.

**6.35** **Regional Programme**; Weather. **6.40** ITV News: Weather.

**7.00** **Bigheads**. Jason Manford hosts the comedy game show in which contestants compete in a series of bizarre physical challenges while wearing giant model heads of Victoria, Winston Churchill, Elton John and Will.i.am. They must dodge past giant bouncers to get into a nightclub, steal champagne, and get away before the paparazzi see them. With commentary from Jenny Powell and Kriss Akabusi.

**8.00** **The Durrells**. Louisa struggles to adapt to Larry moving out. The thought of all her children leaving her drives her to set aside her doubts about pursuing a relationship with Hugh, which leads to a revealing conversation about Vasilia. The younger Durrell children are not sure when their mother's birthday is – so plan a party anyway.

**9.00** **Grantchester**. The village is rocked by a series of armed robberies. Leonard witnesses the first raid and is able to identify one of the criminals – only for the man in question to turn up dead.

**10.00** **ITV News**: Weather.

**10.20** **Peston on Sunday**. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston. Allegro Stratton presents a guide to the latest issues on social media. (R)

**11.20** **Premiership Rugby Union**. Highlights of the final round of top-flight fixtures, which included Wasps v Saracens, Northampton Saints v Harlequins, and Bristol v Newcastle Falcons.

**12.15** **Lethal Weapon**. (R) **1.05** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. Revisiting two couples who wanted a new home and business. (R)

## CHANNEL 4

**6.15** **The King of Queens**. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Saturday Breakfast. **12.30** Ed the Head. (R) **1.30** The Simpson. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** Film: Ghostbusters II. (1989) Supernatural comedy sequel, starring Bill Murray.

**4.40** **World's Most Expensive Cars**. **5.40** George Clarke's Old House, New Home. (R)

**6.35** **Channel 4 News**.

**7.00** **Escape to Costa Rica**. Gaia Vince visits Central America's largest hydroelectric dam and the exclusion zone of an active volcano and discovers how Costa Rica has harnessed one of nature's most destructive forces to provide electricity. She also goes white-water rafting to a remote eco-lodge and helps to build artificial reefs from unlikely recycling materials.

**8.00** **Film: Captain America: The First Avenger**. (2011) A puny but brave volunteer is rejected for military service during the Second World War. He becomes the test subject for an experiment that transforms him into the ultimate soldier, and battles against a secret Nazi society plotting to harness the powers of a mystical artefact. Superhero adventure, with Chris Evans, Hugo Weaving, Hayley Atwell and Tommy Lee Jones.

**10.25** **Film: Prometheus**. (2012) A spacecraft travels to another world in search of aliens that may have created the human race. Ridley Scott's sci-fi thriller, with Noomi Rapace and Michael Fassbender.

**12.45** **Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA**. The Greek at the Harbour restaurant. (R) **1.35** Millionaires' Mansions: Designing Britain's Most Exclusive Homes. The private world of luxury interior design in London. (R) **2.25** The Break Up. Camerica follow a relationship's break up. (R) **3.15** KOTV Boxing Weekly. Jorge Linareas v Anthony Crolla. **3.40** Gillette World Sport. With Maxence Parrot and David Villa. **4.10** Mobi 1 The Grid. (R) **4.35** Shipping Wars UK. Dave and Jenny transport a handcrafted rowing boat. (R) **5.05** Location, Location, Location. Revisiting two couples who wanted a new home and business. (R)

## CHANNEL 5

**6.00** **Milkshake!**: Mr Men. **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.25** Wissper. (R) **6.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.45** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.10** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.10** Other Stories. **7.15** Old McDonald's Little White Van. **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.15** Whisper. (R) **8.25** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **10.55** Caught on Camera. (R) **11.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.20** Film: Cats & Dogs. (2001) Comedy, starring Jeff Goldblum. **3.00** Puppets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **4.00** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **5.00** Film: Journey 2: The Mysterious Island. (2012)

**7.00** **Cricket on 5**. England v Ireland. Highlights of the second contest in the two-Test series, which took place at Lord's. This was the eighth overall meeting in this format of the game between these nations, and just the second to take place on English soil, following quickly from the first encounter at The Brightside Ground in Bristol last Friday.

**8.00** **Football on 5: The Championship**. Action from the final round of regular-season fixtures, including Nottingham Forest v Ipswich Town, Brentford v Blackburn Rovers, and Bristol City v Birmingham City.

**8.55** **5 News Weekend**.

**9.00** **When Magic Goes Wrong**. Illusions that went spectacularly badly, including stories of magicians' brushes with death, as well as mishaps involving Dynamo, Paul Daniels and David Blaine. (R)

**10.00** **Comedy Gold: TV's Funniest Ever Sketches**. Compilation of classic comedy sketches from TV's most popular stars.

**11.25** **Football on 5: The Play-offs**. Action from the League One play-off semi-finals, as the teams battled for a place in the play-off final at Wembley Stadium on Saturday 20 May.

**12.05** **Film: Bangkok Dangerous**. (2008) **1.45** SuperCasino. **3.10** Top 20 Funniest. **4.00** **Criminals: Caught on Camera**. (R)

## DIGITAL

**BBC Four**

**7.00** **The Birth of British Music**. **8.00** **The Secret Life of the Motorway**. **9.00** **Betroffenheit** from Sadler's Wells. **10.50** **Seven Ages of Starlight**. **12.20** **The Story of Maths**. **1.20** **The BBC at War**. **2.20** **Britain's Nuclear Secrets: Inside Sellafield Island**. **3.20** **Close**

**ITV2**

**11.20** **Take Me Out**. **12.40** **Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium** (2007). **1.40** **FYI Daily**. **1.45** **Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium** (2007). **2.30** **Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous** (2005). **3.30** **FYI Daily**. **3.35** **Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous** (2005). **4.45** **Film: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium** (2007). **5.05** **Film: Evan Almighty** (2007). **6.00** **Film: Evan Almighty** (2007). **6.00** **Take Me Out – The Gossip**. **6.15** **Film: Family Guy**. **11.30** **American Dad!**. **12.25** **The Cleveland Show**. **1.25** **The Vampire Diaries**. **2.15** **The Hot Dog**. **3.00** **Blues**. **2.25** **Teleshopping**. **5.55** **ITV2 Nightscreen**

**ITV3**

**12.00** **Film: Columbo: Suitable for Framing** (1971). **1.40** **A Touch of Frost** (1981). **3.45** **Foyles War**. **5.55** **Midsomer Murders**. **8.00** **Royal Stories**. **9.00** **Cameraman to the Queen**. **10.00** **Law & Order: UK**. **12.05** **Wire in the Blood**. **2.05** **Lewis**. **3.45** **May the Best House Win**

**ITV4**

**11.15** **Live British Touring Car Championship**. **6.20** **Football Rivalries**

**6.30** **Pawn Stars**. **7.00** **Fishing Impossible**

**8.00** **Premiership Rugby Union**. **9.00** **Football on 5**. **10.00** **Film: Unforgiven** (1992). **11.00** **FYI Daily**. **11.05** **Film: Unforgiven** (1992). **12.40** **British Superbike Championship**. **1.20** **BRDC Formula 3 Championship**. **2.45** **ITV4 Nightscreen**. **3.00** **Teleshopping**

**5.4**

**1.30** **Brooklyn Nine-Nine**. **2.00** **New Girl**. **2.30** **Rude(ish) Tube Shorts**. **2.40** **The Big Bang Theory**. **4.40** **Film: The Spy Next Door** (2010). **6.30** **The Big Bang Theory**. **9.00** **Marvel's Agents of SHIELD**. **10.00** **Tattoo Fixers**. **12.05** **Rude Tube: Love Bytes**. **1.10** **First Dates**. **2.15** **E4's Tattoo Artist of the Year**. **3.05** **Marvel's Agents of SHIELD**. **3.50** **Hollyoaks**

**5.4**

**1.00** **Gulliver's Travels** (2010). **2.35** **Rugrats Go Wild** (2003). **4.10** **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader** (2010). **6.20** **The Karate Kid** (2010). **9.00** **A Million Ways to Die in the West** (2014). **11.15** **Magic Mike** (2012). **1.30** **The Runaways** (2010). **3.45** **Close**

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## FILM CHOICES

## MONDAY

Parker, Channel 5, 11.05pm  
A thief is betrayed and left for dead by his partners in crime. He learns they are planning a diamond heist in a wealthy neighbourhood, so poses as a millionaire wanting to buy a house in the area. A real-estate agent sees through the disguise and helps him get even by stealing the gems from his gang. Action thriller, with Jason Statham and Jennifer Lopez. (2013)

## TUESDAY

Bone to Pick: Teagarden Mystery, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Librarian sleuth Aurora Teagarden inherits a house when her friend unexpectedly dies and discovers her new home has a skull hidden in a window seat. Mystery, starring Candace Cameron Bure, Peter Benson and Dave Collette. (2015)

## WEDNESDAY

Home, BBC1, 11.45pm

A British family leave their home for what at first appears to be a holiday, but their trip soon turns out to be a very different kind of journey. Short drama, starring Jack O'Connell and Holliday Grainger. (2016)



Win a Date with Tad Hamilton!, Friday, BBC1, 11.55pm  
THURSDAY  
My Family's Secret, Channel 5, 3.15pm  
A man attempts suicide, leaving a cryptic note claiming he may have caused his sister's death. His wife goes back to his home town in search of answers and asks his brother for help. She does not realise her brother-in-law has a split personality, and digging up the past brings out his more dangerous aspects. Thriller, starring Nicholle Tom and Dylan Neal. (2010)

## FRIDAY

Win a Date with Tad Hamilton!, BBC1, 11.55pm  
A screen idol's reputation is damaging his career, so his manager comes up with a plan to rehabilitate the actor's public image by giving ordinary women across America the chance to win a date with him. The prize eventually goes to a supermarket checkout girl – much to the annoyance of her best friend, who has secretly carried a torch for her for years. Romantic comedy, with Kate Bosworth and Topher Grace. (2004)

## Judges John and Gregg have served up a treat for the final

MasterChef fans are a loyal lot. It's genuinely accepted these days that the show only becomes compulsive viewing in the final week, so top marks if you've managed to stay the course again throughout its 12th series.

At least there have been plenty of variety in the tasks, as increasingly svelte pudding-king Gregg Wallace and sidekick John Torode have gone about their business whittling down the original 64 contenders.

There have been Calling Cards, Invention Tests, Critic's Meals and Chef's Tables, as well as heats, knockout weeks, team relays and trips abroad.

Some would say it's almost as confusing as the cooks' complicated dishes.

This week has already been a gruelling one for the finalists attempting to bake, fry, steam, roast and boil their way to success.

On Monday, the remaining five went to Winfield House, the official residence of the US ambassador to the UK, where they had just four

hours to serve a five-course dinner with an American theme for the diplomat and his guests, under the watchful eye of Michelin-starred chef Paul Ainsworth.

Then on Wednesday, the surviving four embarked on a culinary adventure in South Africa, where their skills will be pushed to the limit in three demanding tests involving a braai (a traditional South African barbecue), a lunch service at The Test Kitchen, ranked as one the world's top 25 restaurants, and a dinner fit for Cape Town's cultural and culinary elite.

Then last night, the chefs were whittled down again as they faced the toughest challenge of the competition – the Chef's Table.

First, they were out to impress judges Wallace and Torode to decide which of the trio deserves to succeed last year's victor Jane Devonshire and be crowned MasterChef Champion 2017.

Then the remaining trio got the chance to cook a three-course lunch menu alongside modern culinary legend Sat Bains at his two-Michelin-starred restaurant in Nottingham.

However, to add to the pressure, a table of the UK's finest chefs – Shaun Rankin, Steve Groves, Tom Kitchin, Paul Ainsworth, Ashley Palmer-Watts and Clare Smyth – were waiting with knives and forks in hand to sample their efforts.

Tonight, the formidable seven-week contest reaches its climax and the finalists are pushed to the limit one last time.

This is their chance to show everything they have learned, and over three hours demonstrate what sort of cook they have become.

They must produce three exceptional courses, push the culinary boundaries and give the judges an awe-inspiring tasting.

Then it's over to Wallace and Torode to decide which of the trio deserves to succeed last year's victor Jane Devonshire and be crowned MasterChef Champion 2017.

Despite MasterChef the series being a slog at times, this final should, like any mouthwatering starter dish, leave fans wanting more.



John Torode and Gregg Wallace in MasterChef: The Finals, Friday, BBC1, 8.30pm

## BEST OF THE REST

## MONDAY

Inside the Gang: Young Blood  
Channel 5, 9pm

On some of Britain's toughest estates, gangs are increasingly a way of life. But just what does being a member involve, and what happens to the recruits who decide they want out? Those are the questions at the heart of the first edition of a new series, which sets out to expose the truth about British gangs. Veteran members, known as 'olders', reveal how younger members are attracted by the lure of money, girls and flash cars, only to find themselves being used to sell drugs and carry out acts of violence. But some of these 'olders' are shocked by just how far the new generation is prepared to go.

Little Boy Blue  
ITV, 9pm

With the dream team of writer Jeff Pope (one of the brains behind *Philomena* and *Cilla*) and star Stephen Graham on board, this has turned into one of the most compelling dramas of the year. And this week's offering does little to diminish its impact. When potential witness Claire Ollsen is intimidated into changing her statement, the investigation team look for alternative ways to reinforce their case. As Steve returns to work, Kelly is offered a deal that tests his resolve. Sinead Keenan also stars.

## TUESDAY

Elizabeth I: Battle for the Throne  
Channel 5, 9pm

Many big stars have played Elizabeth I, from Bette Davis to Helen Mirren, Judi Dench to Cate Blanchett, Quvenzhané Wallis to Glenda Jackson and beyond. Now model-turned-actress Lily Cole is taking on the mantel of Good Queen Bess in this three-part docudrama; Suzannah Lipscomb and Dan Jones present the documentary parts. The first edition focuses on Elizabeth's early life, which saw her declared illegitimate, banished from court and frozen out of Henry VIII's life following the beheading of her mother, Anne Boleyn. She was then third in line to the throne; the premature deaths of her half-siblings Edward and Mary paved the way for her coronation at the age of 25 - her road to the crown had been a rocky one, and there were other obstacles looming on the horizon.

WEDNESDAY

Quadruplets and Homeless

Channel 4, 10pm

After 10 years of trying to have a child together, Aynur and Tony are surprised to hear the news

they have four coming along all at once. With quadruplets on the way and no home of their own, the couple move in with Aynur's supportive, traditional Turkish parents. Although they do not always see eye to eye, Tony is determined to prove to her family that he will be committed when their new arrivals are born, despite his struggles with alcohol.



Little Boy Blue, Monday, ITV, 9pm

THURSDAY  
The Truth About Sleep  
BBC1, 9pm

Medical journalist and chronic insomniac Michael Mosley journeys into the world of sleep, finding out what it is and what happens to someone if they do not get enough. Michael seeks to discover whether his own insomnia runs in the family, sending off a blood sample for DNA analysis, and meets Dr Eleanor Scott in Leeds who is doing research into a possible link between Type 2 diabetes and lack sleep.

Born to Kill  
Channel 4, 9pm

With Sam's father released from prison, Jenny makes a desperate effort to get to the bottom of her son's increasingly dangerous behaviour. But she fears she may be too late. Conclusion of the gripping psychological thriller about a seemingly normal teenager whose dark desires start to emerge after he discovers the truth about the father he believed was dead, starring Romola Garai, Jack Rowan, Richard Coyle, Daniel Mays and Lara Peake. Last in the series.

FRIDAY  
Inside the Houses of Parliament  
Channel 5, 9pm

It's one of Britain's most iconic buildings, but a lot of people are too distracted by the squabbling and occasional scandals that goes on inside Westminster to pay much attention to the structure itself. Here, cameras explore the corridors of power to uncover a maze of secret rooms and hidden words that contain the beating heart of the British state. But while the Houses of Parliament may look imposing, they have also been exposed to two centuries worth of British weather and pollution. The programme reveals how the leaking roof and crumbling walls could take 40 years to repair.

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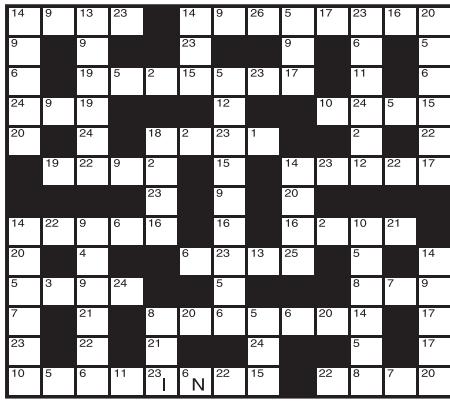
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## BRAIN GYM

No.428

## Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
D	P	C	M	L	J	E	O	G	T	Y	U	W	

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Q	N	K	A	B	I	V	X	R	H	F	Z	S	

## Quiz

- What was Charles Sherwood Stratton's nickname?
- In which religion are the Veda the most sacred scriptures?
- Where did Body Shop's Anita Roddick open her first shop?
- Who wrote the musical Oliver!?
- Of what is the predatory crown-of-thorns a variety?
- Which North African capital is known in Arabic as Tarabulus al-Gharb?
- What type of creature is a mara?
- Over how many days is a decathlon held?
- Which 1930s film star married three oil millionaires?
- In which county is the village of Stilton?

## Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

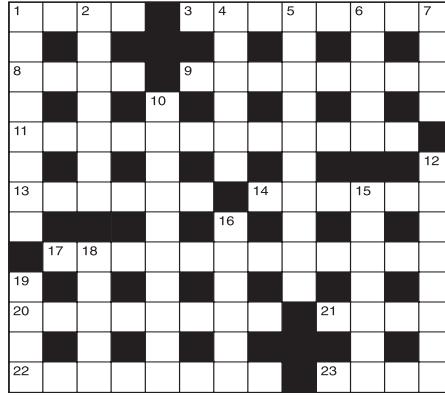
## Cryptic Clues:

## Across

- Even well-done steaks are nowadays! (4)
- Strung up (8)
- Forbid a rigged vote (4)
- American prison with emphasis on harmony? (4-4)
- Wait to start a game of ping-pong? (5,2,5)
- Native found in bed (6)
- Amuse touchingly (6)
- They often invite you to their houses (6,6)
- A diet put out for fitness (8)
- Song needs a tuneful backing (4)
- Indeed not all went (8)
- The advantage being sharp gives one? (4)

## Down

- The last thing those taking exams should do (8)
- Sends back the proceeds (7)
- They raise this so awkwardly (6)
- Impressions of some artists (10)
- Not only soldiers may be bored by it (5)
- Appreciates accommodation (4)
- He does well with his money (10)
- Picture which has a main theme (8)
- Relatively gentle colour? (7)
- Has it a piercing eye? Just the opposite (6)
- Beg to put off retirement (3,2)
- Music circle (4)



## Quick Clues:

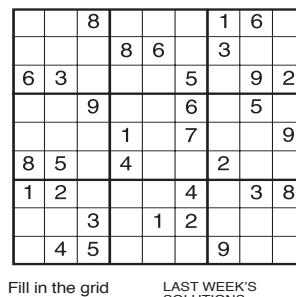
## Across

- Slender (4)
- Boiling vessel (8)
- Spindle (4)
- Likely (8)
- A diet put out for fitness (8)
- Song needs a tuneful backing (4)
- Indeed not all went (8)
- The advantage being sharp gives one? (4)

## Down

- Coastline (8)
- Malady (7)
- Missiles (6)
- Scientific workroom (10)
- Irresistible (12)
- Redbreast (5)
- Require (4)
- Bishops (10)
- Showed (12)
- Detached (8)
- Nothing (4)
- Thwarts (8)
- Call forth (5)
- Flaccid (4)

## Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >  

2	7	9	1	5	8	3	6	4
8	3	1	4	9	6	2	7	5
6	5	4	7	3	2	8	9	1
9	1	2	3	6	4	5	8	7
5	6	8	2	1	7	9	4	3
3	4	7	5	8	9	6	1	2
1	8	3	6	7	5	4	2	9
7	2	6	9	4	3	1	5	8
4	9	5	8	2	1	7	3	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:  
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Infantryman; 9 Invoice; 10 Asset; 11 Helot; 12 Extract; 13 Escort; 15 Spinal; 18 Senegal; 20 Token; 22 Overt; 23 Whereas; 24 Temporarily; Down: 2 Novel; 3 Aviator; Thebes; 5 Yeast; 6 Abstain; 7 High tension; 8 Stateliness; 14 Concede; 16 Patient; 17 Flower; 18 Get-up; 21 Kneel.  
QUICK - Across: 1 Information; 9 Retreat; 10 Refer; 11 Sides; 12 Nominal; 13 Chosen; 15 Assess; 18 Treasury; 20 Eatener; 22 Oracle; 23 Express; 24 Tree and easy. Down: 2 Noted; 3 Overseer; 4 Mulling; 5 Thrum; 6 Offence; 7 Prosecution; 8 Anteless; 14 Open-air; 16 Steeple; 17 Unseen; 19 Sieve; 21 Tress.

## Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

15338174  
926642  
159124789

gives a flower,  
gives a plant,  
gives a weed.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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The sweeping entrance and lovely gardens at The Belfry hotel



Choice of three golf courses

# This is luxury – par excellence

FROM the minute you drive up the winding driveway to The Belfry you are struck by the luxury and class of this hotel and resort.

A chandelier of golf clubs provides a dramatic entrance to The Belfry's reception and that's before you take in the Brabazon Bar in its art deco style.

Our 10-year-old son has taken up golf and keen to do things as a family we decided to try our hand at the sport.

It was with this new and shared interest in a 'frustrating but fun' sport that we thought we would visit The Belfry at Wishaw, near Sutton Coldfield. Just an hour's drive from home you could say that it is virtually on our doorstep.

The Belfry is synonymous with golf and has been home to the Ryder Cup four times – it has played host to more Ryder Cup matches than any other venue in the world.

Our family room had a balcony overlooking the stunning Brabazon course. Its manicured greens and majestic fairways have challenged the biggest legends of the golfing world.

By Lisa Bailey

It was glorious to be able to stand on the balcony and look out at this iconic course.

We started the day with a family lesson at the PGA Golf Academy – it's the only PGA branded golf academy in England.

The academy was a hive of activity and we were swept away by senior PGA coach Derek Simpson to our session in one of the five individual custom fitting suites. An hour flew by with Derek giving us a masterclass on our swing – watching and then videoing our technique in detail.

Our posture and swing were compared to Tiger Woods (a tad unfair I think!), but it was so interesting to see how all three of us performed. Derek was professional and his great sense of humour kept us entertained and enthusiastic.

The hour's lesson was a warm up for our game later in the day. The Belfry has three courses – Brabazon as mentioned, the PGA National which has hosted two European tour events and The Derby.

The Derby is a parkland course and is perfect for players of all levels. As beginners

it was the course for us. A little daunted at first, we teed off and thoroughly enjoyed the nine holes we played of the 18-hole tree-lined course. Described as a gentle challenge, it posed more of a difficult task for the three of us.

The class of the hotel is on a par with the fantastic golf courses. It seems to cater for all. For families it has the indoor pool, woodland walk and The Belfry's Ryder Legends Mini Golf course – a 12-hole course inspired by the legendary Ryder Cup courses.

## Classics

For couples there is the luxury spa with treatments and the unique experience of Fire & Ice featuring 12 bio-thermal rooms. There is also the AA Rosette restaurant The Ryder Grill, where you can enjoy a la carte dining and stunning views of the golf course while watching the open plan kitchen.

And, if you are there for business, there are 22 conference and event rooms, as well as the golf, restaurants, bars, a nightclub and spa. In 2013, The Belfry underwent a £26 million renovation. Further work has

since been carried out to the spa and other

areas of the four-star hotel and resort.

Food at the resort can be either casual or a la carte in The Ryder Grill. Rocca's Pizza Pasta Restaurant hit the spot on the first night with a menu of Italian classics. The casual surroundings were ideal with various parties coming in through the evening – most did not seem to be staying at the hotel, but had travelled to the hotel.

Tomato and buffalo mozzarella, stuffed mini calzone and spicy chicken rigatoni were just some of the delicious dishes we had. Our son had his eye on Rocca's Chocolate Amore – a layered chocolate heaven cake – for dessert, but unfortunately he did not leave any room.

From the minute we arrived to the moment we left, service at The Belfry was outstanding. Staff wherever we went were polite and professional, and seemed to go that extra mile. It was also so nice to see younger members of staff were courteous. My husband and I passed comment after our visit that we had not encountered such friendly staff in a large venue before.

The Belfry was a wonderful place to spend family time together.

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# PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY  
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BUYING AND  
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## Bungalow in much sought-after spot has three bedrooms

A unique and impressive three-bedroomed detached bungalow in Mill Lane, Willenhall, lies in a much sought-after position in Short Heath.

Having been recently improved, it is now for sale through L&S Prestige Estates at offers in excess of £250,000.

Features include an en-suite to the master bedroom, a 25ft lounge, and extensive off-road parking.

Well decorated throughout in neutral modern shades, its well-proportioned and adaptable living accommodation briefly comprises of an entrance porch, an entrance hall with tiled flooring, a very attractive 25ft lounge with wood-effect flooring and a highly appealing feature focal point fireplace.

There is also a separate dining room with wood-effect flooring and ample space for a table and chairs, making it ideal for entertaining.

The modern fitted kitchen is again in an attractive design, having contemporary white unit doors, wood-block-effect working surfaces and wood-effect flooring and splash-back tiling. The separate utility room is generous in size, having modern white units and contrasting black work surfaces and slate-style flooring.

The three bedrooms are all doubles, with an en-suite to the master and a family bathroom with a white suite including both a roll top bath with claw feet and separate shower cubicle.

The property also has UPVC double glazing and gas central heating throughout.

To the outside there is extensive off-road parking and a detached garage to the fore and side, as well as an enclosed garden to the rear, including a balcony/terrace.

The property is superbly situated for access to a wide range of local amenities, popular local schools and excellent transport links.

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to undertake internal viewing to fully appreciate the size, layout and presentation of the accommodation on offer.

WILLENHALL £250,000



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### KEY FEATURES

Impressive detached bungalow

3 double bedrooms

Bathroom & en-suite

Extensive parking

Sought-after spot



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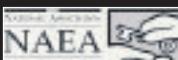
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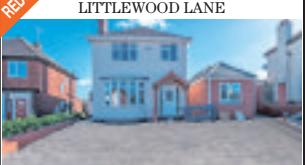
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SHORT HEATH



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SHORT HEATH



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BENTLEY



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SUMMER HAYES



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185000

RIVERPOINT



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WILLENNHALL



**LYDNEY CLOSE, WILLENNHALL**  
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BENTLEY



**INGLEDEOW CLOSE, WALSALL**  
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COUNTY BRIDGE



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Offers In Excess Of £140,000

QUEENS LEA



**QUEENS LEA, WILLENNHALL**  
Three Bed End Town House, 19ft Lounge/Diner, Conservatory, Fitted Kitchen, Covered Outbuildings With Storage, Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Off Road Parking, Enclosed Rear Garden

OIEO £125,000

BLOXWICH



**SNEYD LANE, BLOXWICH**  
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NEW INVENTION



**RUGELEY AVE, WILLENNHALL**  
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£102,500

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OIEO £95,000

WILLENNHALL



**VICTORIA STREET, WILLENNHALL**  
Two Bed Mid Terrace, Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Loft Room, Modern Family Bathroom, D/Glazing & C/Heating, Enclosed Rear Garden, Great F.T.B Or B.T.L

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WILLENNHALL



**VICTORIA STREET, WILLENNHALL**  
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COPPIE FARM



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WILLENNHALL



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**WILLEHALL**

**£125,000**

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**NEW**



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- Victorian Apartment
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- Lounge with Open Fireplace
- Superb Views
- Two Double Bedrooms
- EPC - E

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**No Chain**



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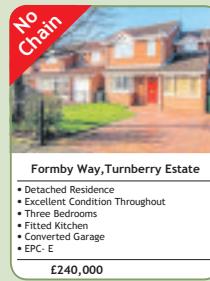
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**Waters Keep, Leamore**

- Light and airy lounge
- Spacious Kitchen / Diner
- Downstairs W.C
- Rear French Doors
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Family Bathroom

From £136,500



**Alumwell Road, Walsall**

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- Porch
- Lounge
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- Easy Access to the M6 Motorway
- EPC - D

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**Waters Keep, Leamore**

- Light and airy lounge
- Spacious Kitchen / Diner
- Downstairs W.C
- Rear French Doors
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Family Bathroom

From £118,995



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- Suitable Buy-To-Let
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- Double Bedroom
- No Chain
- EPC - C

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## Department for Transport

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)(a)  
AND THE MOTORWAYS TRAFFIC (ENGLAND AND WALES)  
REGULATIONS 1982 - REGULATION 16(2)

THE M6 TOLL MOTORWAY

(JUNCTION 11A TO JUNCTION 7) (STAFFORDSHIRE)

(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2017

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Secretary of State for Transport has made an Order on the M6 Toll Motorway, in the County of Staffordshire, to allow resurfacing, safety fencing, drainage maintenance and communication and electrical works to be carried out.

The effect of the Order will be to close -

- 1) the southbound carriageway of the M6 Toll from its junction with the exit slip road at 11a, to its junction with the entry slip road at Junction 7;
- 2) the slip road leading to the southbound carriageway of the M6 Toll at Junction T8; and
- 3) various lanes of the southbound carriageway of the M6 Toll from a point 120 metres north of the centreline of Great Saredon Road overbridge, to a point 170 metres south of the centreline of A460 Middlehill Overbridge, and allow traffic to run on the hard shoulder.

The work will be carried out overnight between 21:00 hours and 06:00 hours and is expected to start on Tuesday 9 May 2017 and continue for 8 months. The order will come into force on 2 May 2017. Vehicles being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes and vehicles being used by a traffic officer or being used in connection with the works will be exempt from the closures.

A diversion route via the A460 will be signed.

For further information please contact Letty Askew of Highways England Company Limited on 0300 470 2799.

J Griffiths, a Divisional Director in the Department for Transport.

Walsall Council, Planning, Engineering and  
Transportation

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Development Management Procedure Order 2015 (as amended)

The below applications have been made to the Walsall Council. Applications can be viewed at First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Walsall or online www.walsall.gov.uk/planning. Representations can be made online, email: planningservices@walsall.gov.uk or in writing to Head of Planning and Building Control, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG. Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice. Please note: Your letter and personal details will form part of the planning file which is a public document and will be available for inspection at the Council Offices. The information may be released as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

17/0247 Mr Mark Daniels FOR: SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION TO REPLACE EXISTING REAR EXTENSION, UNDERGROUND STORE WITH RETAINING WALL AND STEPS, REAR BOUNDARY WALL TO REPLACE FENCE, AT: 39, BUCHANAN AVENUE, WALSHALL, WS4 2ER

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Personals

## personal

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Penn's Sandeep Dhillon keeps wicket as Springvale's Matt Bennett bats



Wednesbury bowler Sajid Nazir bowls to Matt Axton, at Wednesbury Sports Union and Cricket Club



Paceman Dan Wale will spearhead Pelsall's attack this year



Ex-Pelsall man Steve Blews has joined Hammerwich

## Bentley bag cup against Casuals

AFC BENTLEY proved they were up for the cup as they picked up the GA Evans Cup after a 2-0 win against Otter & Vixen in the final at Wolverhampton Casuals. AFC Jacks are favourites to lift the Premier Division title after clocking up their 10th win in 12 league outings. A 2-1 success at Emerald Athletic put Jacks level on points with leaders Diffusion.

Huf UK are still battling for Division One glory. A 6-2 win against All Saints Athletic leaves them five points behind leaders Gospel Oak. Frying Pan Darlaston were 2-0 winners at home to Wednesfield Red Lion while Punjab United Sports crushed Grapes 6-0. Division Two champions Old Bulls Head maintained their unbeaten run with a 3-1 triumph at SWL Spartak. The mid-table clash between Balls to Cancer and Malthouse ended up 2-1 in Malthouse's favour. The race for the Division Three title continued with the top two both tasting success. Andrew Turvey had a four-goal blast as leaders Belgrave turned on the power to an 8-1 success away to Dynamo 50 Stile. Second-placed Warstones Wanderers marched to a 6-0 win on home soil against Churchill Rovers, while Royal George went down 3-1 to Tettenhall Royal Oak. Wolves Pride boosted their hopes of being crowned Division Four champions by defeating Ashmore 11-0.

# Cricket clubs looking to hit their rivals for six

## SPORTING MEMORIES

By Jack Bradley

**THE Staffordshire Club Cricket Championship Premier Division season has opened up with 12 teams vying for glory.**

Milford Hall took the spoils last summer and a place in the Birmingham League, but who will be successful this year? We take a look at the top flight line-up.

**Aldridge CC**

**Captain: Dan Shortland**

**One to watch: Royeth Hussain**

Aldridge go into the season with a new philosophy after a campaign that saw them finish soundly in mid-table in 2016. This summer will see the side line-up with more fresh faces, having done the majority of their recruitment internally by promoting players from their youth team. Captain Dan Shortland believes that approach will prove to be exciting at least. "We are excited really," he said. "We are looking to change the focus of the club as we have lost about five members of the first team. Now we have a lot of younger players stepping up. In particular, this is the year that I am looking forward to seeing the emergence of Royeth Hussain."

**Beacon CC**

**Captain: Daniel Green**

**One to watch: Tom Bingham**

Having finished runners-up for the past two seasons, Beacon will have a new man in charge this summer with Dan Green taking on the lead role. It's an opportunity that Green is relishing, having started his playing days as a youngster at the club. "I am really looking forward to it," he said. "I have played for Beacon since I was a young lad and it is something I always really wanted to do." Green predicts the usual suspects will be in the mix for title glory. "There is the usual teams – Pelsall and Penn are always tough and then teams like Cannock and Hammerwich, who are always towards the top of the table," he said.

**Cannock CC**

**Captain: Will Fleet**

**One to watch: Adam Benton**

What could be considered a new project is being undertaken at Cannock, as the club is trying to develop both on and off the pitch after last season's third-placed finish. The season ahead will still be about de-

## Ex-Albion and Villa man is Cowes boss

FORMER Albion and Villa winger Steve Hunt has been appointed manager of Cowes Sports on the Isle of Wight.

The 60-year-old, who won two caps for England in 1984, was named boss of the ninth-tier team on the last day of the season after they assured their Sydenhams Premier League survival.

Hunt's only previous managerial experience came at Willenhall Town in the late 1980s, although he also worked as a youth team coach for Port Vale and Leicester City.

Cowes Sports FC made the announcement on their Facebook page, saying: "We're delighted to announce that former Coventry, West Brom, Villa and England winger Steve Hunt is our New 1st Team manager. Welcome Steve!"

The Sydenhams Premier League feeds into Southern League Division One South and West.

Until Jake Livermore featured against Germany last month, Hunt held the record as the last West Bromwich Albion outfield player to line up for England.

**Hammerwich CC**  
**Captain: John Jennings**  
**One to watch: Ben Novis**

Hammerwich will begin their campaign having made three new additions in the bowling department, bringing in Steve Blews, Jamie Holmes and Ben Novis. Coming off the back of a steady season last year in which they finished fourth in the standings, captain John Jennings believes the additions will help push on an already strong side. "We matched any team that we played last year," said Jennings, "The new players will make us stronger this season. We're looking forward to it now, especially as we have brought in these new players."

**Pelsall CC**  
**Captain: Danny Pennell**  
**One to watch: Jake Lee**

Pelsall will be looking to build on their fifth-place finish, with their relegation hangover no longer looming from the 2015 campaign. The club have gone through a period of transition with players coming and going, but skipper Danny Pennell believes they have added a lot of quality. "It's been quite transitional really but we have brought in four really good players," he said. "Jake Lee, Tom Wright, Dan Wale and Australian Thomas Gravina have all come in. They bring much more athleticism in the field. There has really been an influx of youth." Regarding 'one to watch' Jake Lee, Pennell believes he is at the right club at the right time to progress.

**Rugeley CC**  
**Captain: Scott Gretton**  
**One to watch: Ali Fawcett**

Rugeley club captain Scott Gretton has been quick to emphasise the quality of his team before their season-opener against Penn as they look forward to competing in the top flight following last season's promotion. Gretton said: "I'm very excited about the season because it's a very competitive league. We have got people who joined the club last season but could not play due to work commitments now available which will make a difference." Regarding the arrival of Australian overseas player Nathan Timbrell, Gretton added: "He wants to come over here and get some more experience. It is exciting because he has played at a decent standard of cricket in Australia."

## Early goal and league leaders left lacking

**Wolves Women 3 Loughborough Foxes 2**

WOLVES Women's last home game of the season gave fans a thrilling 3-2 victory over league leaders Loughborough Foxes.

Wolves made their early pressure pay in the eighth minute as Captain Anna Perks headed home from a Jen Anslow corner. Loughborough got the equaliser in the 17th minute as Cooper slotted the ball past the oncoming Chloe Evans, colliding with her as the ball trickled into the net.

Wolves' hard work paid off in the 36th minute as they regained their lead from a Jodie Bragan header, making it 2-1 at the break. It didn't take long to score again as Bragan headed in her second, and Wolves' third, from a Laura McQuillan corner. Loughborough's persistence paid off in the 77th minute as Eastham's shot went over the top of Evans and into the net, making it 3-2 to set up a nervy finale.

Wolves had a penalty appeal waved away in the 85th minute before a shot from Jade Cross which was saved by the keeper.

With Loughborough pressing Wolves maintained their composure and stood firm to record an impressive victory in a thrilling game.



Walsall & Willenhall

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